THE

CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP OF CHILDREN, AND THEIR RIGHT TO BAPTISME

According to that holy and everlasting *COVENANT* of GOD, established between Himself, and the Faithfull, and their Seed after them, in their Generations:

Cleared up in a Letter, sent unto a worthy Friend of the AUTHOR, many Yeares agoe written touching that subject;

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Published at the earnest request of many: for the Consolation and Encouragement, both of Parents and Children in the Lord.

Genesis 17. 7. *And I will establish my Covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their Generations, for an Everlasting Covenant, to be a GOD unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*

Mark. 16. 16. *He that Believeth, and is Baptized, shall be saved.*

Acts. 2. 39. *For the Promise is unto you, and to your Children, and to all that are afarr off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

1 Cor. 7. 14. *Else were your Children unclean, but now are they Holy.*

CAMBRIDG
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CHEMNITIUS, that eminent light in the Church of God in those elaborate workes of his against the Papists (*Exam: part 2. can: 14. de Baptismo*) hath this memorable saying, *viz.*

IT *is not to be left free, to the choice of those who have been* Baptized *in Infancy, when they come to be* Adult, *whether or no they will have that confirmed, which was done in their* Baptisme; *as though the Covenant of grace, & Testament of peace, which is offered and sealed up to little Children in* Baptisme, *should then first begin to be established, when the consent of their will, when* Adult, *is added thereunto: for from this wicked foundation, the* Anabaptists *simply have taken away, and Condemned* Pædobaptisme; *but such* Baptized *little ones are to be admonished, as they grow up, what a Covenant of Grace, and Testament of peace it is, which God hath entred into with them in* Baptisme: *and by what promise of gratitude they have likewise obliged themselves unto Obedience to God, with the renouncing of the Devil; and they are seriously to be exhorted, that they render thanks to God for that wonderful great Benefit, that they abide in that Covenant of peace, and endeavour to fullfil that obligation, by mortifying sin, and setting upon newness of life, and that they do this freely, and sincerely: or if they shall, through unthankfullness, depart from that Covenant, and ingagement, that then they repent, and return to the Covenant, and subject themselves again to that stipulated Obedience. But as for them that shall do otherwise, the most severe comminations of the wrath and Indignation of God are to be heap't up, and set before them; unto which* [saith he] *excommunication is to be added, for these are the weapons of our warfare.* 2. Cor. 10.

A PREFACE TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

Might I have had mine own choice, and desires granted, some other should have performed the task of a Preface *to the following* Treatise *of my precious and much Honoured Father; but being put upon it, by divers worthy friends, whom I knew not how to deny, I shall therefore humbly premise a word or two, in tenderness to the Truth, and out of unfained love to those especially of Christ's poor sheep (how ever feeble, or diseased) that either have been, or may be in danger of going astray from so great a Truth, as is the subject of the ensuing discourse: being sincerely desirous, that they may be restored, and from thence returned unto the Shepherd, and Bishop of our Soules, and may in nothing be made a prey to him, who is our great adversary, the Devil, who walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.* For we should not be ignorant of his devices.

The enmity put by the Lord between the *seed of the Woman* and *the seed of the Serpent*, *Gen.* 3.15. soon began to work, even in the infancy of the Church, in the family of our first Parents, as we see *Gen.* 4. 8. by the Martyrdome of *righteous Abel*. No small portion of that fixed hatred, and hostility of the *old Serpent*, hath ever since been discovered against the young ones of Christs little flock. The multiplication of the Children of Israel, is the occasion why *Pharaoh* deals *so wisely* as we read; endeavouring first by the *Midwives*, secretly to destroy the *male Children*: and after that, more openly by an Edict, to *drown them* in his Egyptian waters; for which what ever his pretence might be, alleadged *Exod.* 1. 10. yet no doubt (as *Calvin* on the place somewhat that way hint's) Satan had a design therein, to cut of the name and posteriry of *Abraham* (who is the Father *of all them that believe*, even of US all: *the Father of many nations*, *Rom.* 4. 11, 16, 17.) and so to evacuate, and annihilate the promise of God, even that great promise of his everlasting Covenant, to be a God to him, and to his seed for ever, in their Generations. Hence also afterward we find this spite of the great *accuser* of the *brethren*, vented against these poor little ones, in the forbidding them Communion with the Church of God in that Worship which God had

inſtituted, and which he had Commanded his People by the hand of *Moſes* and *Aaron*, to obſerve, *Exod.* 10. 3. *let my People goe*, that *they may ſerve me*, ſaith the Lord: but hardhearted Pharaoh ſeemes to ſcruple whether the young Children are a part of the Lord's People, as appears by his queſtion *verſe* 8. [*But who are they that ſhall goe?*] *Moſes* pleads for the young, as well as the old; for *the Sons*, and *the Daughters*, *verſe* 9. but Pharaoh is of another apprehenſion, and reſolution, *verſe* 10, 11. he will let the men goe and ſerve the Lord, but not the little ones. Again *Haman* the Agagite we find is not ſatisfied with the deſtruction of the *old Generation* of the *Jewes*, but the little Children of the Church alſo are expreſly mentioned, and deſigned to the ſame condemnation, and Maſſacre with their Fathers *Eſth.* 3. 13.

And much more of the like nature might be alledged out of many records both eccleſiaſtical, and other, were it needfull: the ſatanicall deluſions of thoſe *heretical Cataphrygians*, and *Pepuzians of old*, who were wont to mingle the *Euchariſt* with the blood of an Infant of a year old, (of whom Auſtin ſpeaks, *Tom.* 6. *de hæreſibus ad Quoavultdeum*) are not unknown. Not here to inſiſt on that Inſtance of *Herods* Infanticide, *Mat.* 2. 16, 17. We need not ſo much wonder at *Hazaels* cruelty againſt the Children of *Iſrael* in *ſlaying their young men with the ſword, and daſhing their Children, and ripping up their Women with Child*, 2 *King.* 8. 12. ſeing Satan hath many times prevailed with thoſe who were Church-Members, and of long ſtanding in the houſe of God even the parents themſelves, to murder and ſacrifice their Infants and little ones, which were the Lords Children, and born unto the Lord, *Ezek.* 16, 20, 21. *&c.* Such an evil eye doth that great adverſary of our comfort, and Salvation (ſeing himſelfe ſhut out of the Kingdom of Heaven) bear againſt theſe little ones, whom Chriſt hath taken in to himſelfe, and concerning whom our Saviour profeſſeth, that of *ſuch is the Kingdome of God*, *Luke* 18. 16. So doth he envy to ſee them in the armes of Chriſt and bleſſed by him, and to have any room in his houſe, or ſo much as an externall viſible intereſt in the Covenant, with the initiatory ſeal and livery thereof. Baptiſme being the ſeal to all Chriſtianity, 'tis Satan's policy therefore to ſtrike at that, that in caſhiering it, he may have

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at All; Hereunto tend's his dealing with *witches* many times, (of which divers have ſpoken) in cauſing them when they become firſt his *Proſelytes*, ſolemnly to renounce the Trinity (into the name of which they have been Baptiſed) eſpecially their ſalvation by Chriſt, and faith *Cooper, in his book entituled, the myſterie of witchcraft diſcovered.* Cap. 6. ſec. 1 pag. 91. in token thereof to diſclaim their Baptiſme.

An ill office and work then ſurely are they imployed in, whoſe way and indeavours, ſhall center in the accompliſhing of that which Satan hath been ſo buſily, and with ſuch malignity, for ſo many ages undertaking, and no great thanks will ſuch receive for that labour from the Lord Jeſus another day. If Chriſt was ſo much diſpleaſed, that *his diſciples rebuked thoſe, who brought their children to him*, Mark 10.14: And if the *Apoſtle Peter* received ſo ſevere a check as wee read *Mat.* 16.22,23. for ſpeaking that, which had a tendency to take the Lord Jeſus off from *laying down the price of Redemption*: how much more then will he be now diſpleaſed if (after ſuch rebuke and warning given) any ſhall attempt, to keep from him, and deprive him of, his *Redeemed*, whom he hath purchaſed by ſo dear a price? ſo many, I mean, of his purchaſed ones, as the number of the infants and children of Believers (dead, and alive, and to be born,) amount's unto? why may we not believe, that an exceeding great multitude of *the Sheep that ſhall be ſeen ſtanding at the right hand of Jeſus Chriſt in the day of Judgment*, ſhall be a company of theſe Lambs? As to withhold from Chriſt ſo great a part of his purchaſe (the labour of the *Anabaptiſt* muſt needs be no other then highly *Antichriſtian*; ſo to make good and recover the intereſt of Chriſt in ſuch, and the Glory which he obtaines by them, according to the enlarged grant of the charter of his new-Teſtament; the ſcope, and work of theſe few ſheets) is a ſervice pleaſing unto Chriſt, who *out of the mouthes of theſe babes, and ſucklings ordaines perfect praiſe*, Mat. 21. 15, 16. and ſo I truſt will be acceptable to his People, who when as they muſt go down to the duſt and cannot keep alive their own Soules, yet may behold their ſeed ſucceeding them in the ſervice & worſhip of God, being *counted to the Lord for a generation*, Pſal. 22. 28, 29, 30, 31. (*vide Rivet in locum*) Schiſmatically to refuſe to hold Eccleſiaſtical Communion with ſo great a part of the Church of Chriſt, as

the children of believers are, (in many places, the major part thereof) is a rigid and sinfull *Separation*, and gratifying the designe of the Papists (the greatest *Separatists* in the world) as by & by may be further seen.

And indeed the Lord (*avenging the quarrel of his Covenant*, wherin he hath alwayes been exceeding jealous) hath manifested not a little of his anger, and displeasure against those who have troubled these *Baptismal waters of the Sanctuary*; The awfull and tremendous passages of Providence recorded in several histories, concerning the original and progress of *Anabaptisme*: and relating to God's strange, judicial hand against so many of them that have been through-paced therin, in *delivering them up to spiritual judgments, to believe lies*; and to fall, step by step, into almost all sorts of hereſies, and to the commission of the most abhorred impieties, and loathsome wickednesses, and outrages, against the Commands both of the first and second Table, (as *Luther*, *Bullinger*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, and others generally and abundantly testifie) they are very observable, and not to be passed over slightly; and may make every honest & serious heart to tremble when ever he finds himselfe inclining to that path: to this purpose, and concerning *Anabaptism* in this our age (beside many other Authors I might cite) read only *Baxter's Plain Scripture proof of Infants Church-membership*. *Pag.* 138, 139, 140–152. And as in the dawning of the reformation, begun by those Worthies of Christ in the last Centurie, *Anabaptisme* seem's to be the *Troja in horse* wherby so great confusion did befall that *Israel*, and was such a *Remora* to that Glorious work then begun in *Germanie*, and other Neighbouring Countries; so now in the further progresse of that reformation here in this our Israel should *Anabaptisme* likewise (especially accompanied with *Donatisme* it's wonted concubine) brood and become the instrument or medium of our miseries and confusions, possibly then experience (a slow, but many times a sure and severe instructer) may help some at length to see farther into the mystery of this iniquity, then now they do. For in truth it is not improbable, that the *Man of sin* seeing he could not openly & at once ruine the *Reformed Churches* in the dayes of those famous servants of Christ before expresst, did attempt secretly, and gradually to do it this way; *viz.* by

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firſt ſending forth his *Emiſſaries* among the Churches, who might fill them with the Smoake of *Anabaptiſme*, that ſo he might the more ſecurely paſs to and fro, being undiſcerned in ſuch a fog: whence what miſchief was wrought, and what an hindrance thoſe turbulent Anabaptiſts were to the Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt in that age (for that was the firſt time of their *ſwarming*, as the moſt Judicious have obſerved) by *vilifying, reproaching, and decrying the Miniſtry; crying up themſelves as the moſt Godly, ſpirituall, and perfect; Judging the Old-Teſtament to be but as an Almanack out of date; denying Scripture-Conſequences, giving falſe interpretations of Scripture*, eſpecially by *Allegories* wreſting the ſame to their own deſtruction; making and fomenting ſchiſmes and factions in the Churches; *denying the Magiſtrates coercive power in matters of Religion; making their own fanatick ſpirit the ſupream judge unto all kind of diſorder, &c.* the writings of the Godly Learned in thoſe times do abundantly even to amazement inform us. And indeed the great conſent and harmony between the main tenets of the *Anabaptiſts*, and *Papiſts* in this point, gives not a a little ground for holy jealouſie, too ſadly to ſuſpect at what back-door it was that the Anabaptiſt firſt crept forth. And hence it is that in the controvetſies between the *Proteſtants* and the *Papiſts*, we ſhall generally, and abundantly find, the *Papiſts denying the Holyneſs of the Infants of Beleivers before Baptiſme*; and how neer of kin this is to *Anabaptiſme* the reader may eaſily gueſs: and in like manner denying that great truth (as is afterward ſhewed in this Treatiſe) viz. *That the Covenant of God with Abraham under the Old-Teſtament, was the ſame for ſubſtance with what is now confirmed with us under the New-Teſtament, &c.* which (tis known) the *Anabaptiſts* alſo generally aſſert: Let me therefore propound a few inſtances this way, whereby we may ſee what Patrons of *Anabaptiſme* the *Papiſts* are, in regard of thoſe Principles (I mean) and radicall errours wherin the *Papiſts* and *Anabaptiſts* (although by divers of them, upon the account of a diverſe intereſt) Symbolize and unite againſt the Orthodox, and ſpeak herein, in a manner, the ſame thing (diſtinguiſhing alwaies between the *Opinion*, and the *perſon*; and between ſome that are *deceived*, in other points Orthodox and precious Chriſtians; and others that are *Deceivers*.) The main pillars of *Anabaptiſme* being no better then

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ſome of the *Old rotten ſtuds* and *principles of Popery*, fetcht at firſt from thence in all likelyhood, and ſo inclining thitherward again. The *Dialect of the Anabaptiſt* is generally (and too much by ſome) underſtood, and therefore I forbear quotations out of their own writings; poſſibly ſome may not have ſo much taken notice of the like from the Papiſt, and therefore I ſhall briefly manifeſt the ſame, by ſhewing where we ſhall find ſome of the chief of thoſe Worthies that *fought the Lords Battles againſt Antichriſt*, oppoſing, and confuting them both, therein: I will cite a few Particulars this way among many the like which might be produced from ſeverall other *eminent Authors, Holy, burning, and ſhining lights in the churches of Chriſt*, who have been the Lords *Witneſſes againſt the darkneſs of that Spirituall Egypt*; and whoſe Teſtimonie in this matter concludes as ſtrongly againſt the *Anabaptiſts*, having eſpouſed thoſe *Antichriſtian* notions ſo neerly to themſelves.

1. „ In thoſe words of the Covenant (*I will be a God to thee and* „ *thy ſeed after thee*) neither life eternall is promiſed nor remiſſi-„ on of ſins, but onely a certain peculiar temporall protection: ſaith „ *Bellarmine* (agreeing therein with the *Anabaptiſt*) againſt whom here-„ in we find *Chamier* pleading for us, *Panſtrat. tom.* 4. *Lib.* 3 *Cap.* 3. *Parag.* 9, 10. *&c.* and *Rive.* on *Gen.* 17. 11. Again, we read „ (ſaith *Bellarmine*, the great *Goliah* of the *Papiſts*) that God promi-„ ſed unto *Abraham* when he enjoyned him circumciſion, earthly mat-„ ters only, according to the letter: that is, the propagation of a „ poſterity, and the Land of *Paleſtine*. read *Ames* oppoſing him; *Bellarm. Enerv. Tom.* 3 *Lib.* 1 *Chap.* 4. *Theſ.* 9.

2. Touching the perverſe and *Catabaptiſticall intent* and meaning „ of that expreſſion of the *Papiſts*, viz. That *Spirituall promiſes aſ-*„ *cend to us not by carnall generation* (as they call it: *the very Phraſe of* „ *many Anabaptiſts, uſed in a way of deriſion of the Grace of God*) *but by Spirituall & regeneration &c.* (they are the words of *Bellarmine* and other *Papiſts*, cited & confuted by *Ames* & others) read *Ames* his Anſwer thereto, *Bel. Enerv. tom.* 3. *Lib.* 2. *ca.* 1. *Theſ.* 5. (conſonant to the Judgment of the *Orthodox*) viz. *we acknowledg indeed Spirituall regeneration to be neceſſary to the ſolid participation of the promiſes; but that that Regeneration is part of the Promiſes, and belongs in a ſin-*

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gular manner to the Children of Believers, the very forme of the Cove-nant manifeſtly declares. See likewiſe *Chamier largely replying for us againſt Bellarmine, Stapleton, and others of the Papiſts. Panſtrat.* tom. 4 lib. 5. cap. 10. parag. 24,25,26,27, &c:

3. *The Sacraments of the old Law (or Teſtament* ſaith Bellarmine*) had no abſolute promiſe of Grace annexed, & the promiſes annexed to thoſe old Sacraments were fulfilled, although men did not believe.* Read *Ames* againſt him. *ibid. l.* 1. *cap.* 4. *the.* 5,7. Again, *the Papiſts* [ſaith *Chemnit.* *hoſt*; *that God, by the Sacraments of the old Teſtament, which had even the word of promiſe annexed, did exhibite & conferr no grace to Believers, which* [ſaith he] *is maiſeſtly falſe*; Circumciſion alone [which, as he ſheweth from Scripture, is called *the Seal of the righteouſneſs of Faith*] demonſtrateth as much. And thereupon he ſheweth the reaſon why the *Papiſts* ſo much urge that difference between the Sacraments of the old & new Teſtament, *viz.* becauſe they endeavour by any manner of meanes to defend and ſtabliſh the opinion they have of their *opus operatum*. *Chemnitij Exam. par.* 2. *de Sacram. ſub canon.* 2. What a forcible engine of the *man of ſin* this is, and of what vaſt concernment as to his intereſt, I need not here expreſs, and what arrows of *Anabaptiſme*, drawn out of this very quiver, have been ſhot againſt the Orthodox in this point, is known unto not a few.

Moreover, as to the compariſon in Scripture made between the Sacraments of the old and new Teſtament, that in 1 *Cor.* 10.1---4. (among ſeveral other Scriptures) is cited by *Ames* againſt *Bellarmine* where the Apoſtle ſpeake's of our Fathers being *Baptized in the Sea &c*: thereby intimating our Sacraments to be the ſame for ſubſtance with theirs: or Sacramental ſignes and ſeales of one and the ſame ſpiritual grace, ſo that the Covenant-mercies, or promiſes of ſpiritual good are the ſame to us as to them: *Bellarmine* oppoſeth this [as doth the Anabaptiſt] *The Fathers* [ſaith he] *are ſaid to eat the ſame meat not becauſe ours and theirs was the ſame, but becauſe they themſelves, all of them did eat the ſame: but that meat and drinke were not ſacraments; they had no promiſe annexed &c*: Bell. enerv. tom. 3. l. 1. c. 4. th. 10. *and* Cham. panſtrat. tom. 4. l. 3. c. 2.

4. *The ſcripture no where call's Circumciſion a ſeal* [ſaith Bellarmine to Rom. 4.] *unleſs it be in this place, where* Abraham *is ſpoken of, which*

is a manifeſt argument that Circumciſion was a ſeal unto Abraham *alone* Ames. *ibid. c.1. th.12. By this weapon alſo fetcht out of the armory of* Antichriſt, *hath the* Anabaptiſt *not a little gratifyed the common adverſary.*

5. The Papiſts generally aſſert, *That the Baptiſme of* John *was not the ſame for ſubſtance with the Baptiſme of Chriſt, nor had the ſame efficacy, as the Baptiſme of Chriſt hath.* Which tenet ſee confuted by *Cartwright* on the new Teſtament, *Mat.* 3.11. and by *Ames Beller. enerv.* t. 3. l.2. c.5. th.1,2. &c: *and* Rivet *Cathol. orthod.* tractat. 3. qu. 2. *and* Chemnit. *exam. part* 2. *de baptiſmo ſub canon.* 1. *and* Chamier *panſtrat.* t. 4. l.5. c. 12. *ſtill we ſee the harmony between the* Papiſt *and the* Anabaptiſt. And hence we find likewiſe the *Papiſt* pleading for the *rebaptizing* of thoſe who had received the *Baptiſme* of John. *Chamier ibid. cap.*13. *paragr.* 35. &c:

6. The Papiſts aſſert, that *Laicks* [*as they call them, i. e. thoſe that are not in Office in the Church.*] *may in caſe adminiſter* Baptiſme: *yea that not onely* men *but* women *may do it.* Read *Ames* his confutation thereof, *Bell. enerv.* tom. 3. l. 2. cap.2. and *Rivet* againſt *Baily* the Jeſuit, *Cathol. orthod. tractat.*3. *qu.* 7. add thereto *Chamiers Panſtr. tom.* 4. l.5. *cap.* 14. *de legitimo Baptiſmi miniſtro.* where, among other Paſſages, citing the *theſis* of *Suarez* the *Jeſuit*, viz: *that any body whoſoever, that can ſpeak, and waſh, may be a ſufficient Miniſter of* Baptiſme; *whether he be man or woman; believer or unbeliever; baptiſed or not baptized, if ſo be he know how to waſh, and utter the Words with a due intention, hæc aſſertio* (ſaith the Jeſuit) *eſt omnino certa,* But ſaith *Chamier* in the name of the *Orthodox*, we teach the contrary, *viz.* that the right of conferring *Baptiſme* belongs to thoſe only who are *publick Officers in the Church* &c. which accordingly he there makes good againſt the *Papiſts.*

7 *Baily* the *Jeſuite* (whom *Rivet* encountereth) to the Queſtion between the *Orthodox and the Papiſts*; viz. *Whether the Infants of believers are holy before Baptiſme?* he anſwereth roundly for them; *NO. Rivet. Cath. Orthod. Tract.*3. *q.* 3.

And touching that famous place controverted between *our ſelves* and the *Anabaptiſts*, in regard of their wreſting, and perverting the ſence of that Scripture, 1 Cor. 7.14. [*elſe were your Children*

unclean

dren unclean, but now they are Holy] we may obſerve how they tread in the ſteps of the *Papiſts* that have gone before them therein, (as they likewiſo do in that noted Scripture *Col* 2. 11, 12. not allowing *Baptiſme* to anſwer Circumciſion according to the mind and meaning of the *Holy-Ghoſt*: wherein ſee *Ames* againſt them, *Bel. Enerv. Tom.* 3. *l* 1. *Cat.* 4. *Theſ.* 13.. and *Rivet* in *Gen.* 17 *Exercit*: 88. *Pag.* 340. *&c.* Take a taſt of that 1 *Cor.* 7. as followeth; *Bailly* (the Jeſuit) before Cited, *ibid*: *queſt.* 3. laboureth thus to avoid the dint of that text, *The Apoſtle* (*ſaith he*) *either ſpeaks of a civil Sanctification before men, that the Infants ſhould not be ILLEGITAMATE* or *BASTARDS: or elſe of an Inſtrumental Sanctification, becauſe that one ſhall procure the Salvation of the other, &c.* the like we find of *Bellarmine's* apprehention and Judgment of the ſence of that Scripture; *Such Children* (*ſaith he*) *are ſaid to be not* (*unclean*) *that is, Infamous and BASTARDS: but* (*holy*) *that is, LEGITIMATE, and free from civil ignominie: Ames. Ibid. Lib.* 2. *C.* 1. *Theſ.* 6. The Rhemiſts alſo very perniciouſly abuſe this Scripture (and are not therein, without their Antipædobaptiſticall followers) Bleſſed *Cartwright* excellently upon the place in his confutation of their annotations on the new-Teſtament, defend's this cauſe of Chriſt againſt their Popiſh gloſſes: *It is* (*ſaith he*) *one thing* (*oftentimes in the Scripture*) *to be Sanctified, and another to be holy: as for you, you err in both: for when it is ſaid, the unbelieving party is Sanctified by the believing, it is not only meant, as you ſay, that the Marriage is an occaſion of the Sanctification to the infidel party, but that the uſe of the infidel party, in Marriage company, is Sanctified, or made holy and lawfull unto the believing party; as meat and drink is ſaid to be Sanctified unto us by the word & Prayer,* 1 Tim. 4. 5. *and as your Interpretation here is ſhort, ſo in the expoſition of the* Holineſs *of the Children, which are begotten in this Matrimony, it is utterly falſe: and firſt it is to be obſerved, that the Apoſtle ſpeaking of the Children, doth not (as you do) apply one word of them to both, ſaying that they are* Sanctified, *but ſaith that they are* holy; *which is more then he had ſpoken before of the infidel party: for although our meat, and drink be Sanctified unto us, and that the uſe of them is holy to thoſe which are holy, yet the meats, and drinks themſelves are not holy: if therefore you were ſhort in the interpretation*

of Sanctified, *you fail much more, in giving the same exposition unto the* holiness of the children; *for if the* holiness *here spoken of, be not in the* children *when they are* begotten, *and born of the* Parents, *but come unto them afterward by* Baptisme *and* Faith; *there groweth no sufficient comfort unto the faithfull party to continue in* marriage *with the* Infidel, *considering that occasion of* holiness *might come otherwise then by* marriage: *For that which is able to uphold the faithfull in comfort, and strength to abide in* marriage *with the* infidel, *is the knowledg that the Children* begotten *in that* Marriage *are in Covenant, and are Children of Gods favour, and grace, washed in Christs Bloud, and Sanctified by his Spirit; and if you will know what this* Holyness of Children *new-born is; the Apostle telleth you,* Gal. 2. 15. *That it is* [*through the Covenant*] to be a Iew by nature, *or birth, and if you will yet further understand what this* Holyness *of Children is, the Apostle, in the same place, telleth you; that it is, not to be* Sinners by Nature *as those which are born of the* Heathen, *for as much as their sins who are in Covenant, are by Christ not reckoned unto them. And this Doctrine of the* Holyness *of the Children which are born of the* Faithfull, *if you could not attain unto, it is so sensibly set forth unto you, that unless together with the knowledg of* the Truth, *you are also bereaved of your common sence, you cannot be ignorant of it: for how can you but understand, that if the* root be holy, the branch is holy, Rom. 11. 16. *and if* the first fruits be holy, the whole crop is holy *All which privilidges of Children new-born, sometime being proper to the Jewes, are now our priviledges, as well as theirs; sithence we are grown into* one body *with* them, Ephes. 2. 15. *and* (*being* Burgesses *of the same* Heavenly City *that they are*] *must needs have the same* infranchisement, *and* Prerogatives *that they have: not that every one which is born under the Covenant is holy, but that they are so to be taken of the Church, until the contrary do manifestly appear,* &c.

By the premises we may see therefore whence [even from that MOTHER of harlots] probably this Illegitimate birth, this antichrist an fl ud of *Anab* [illegible] hath issued forth; yea and I also fear is like to be nursed, and maintained in it's course, until God hath dried up those breasts, and rivers of spiritual Babylon, in the mean while

while, *Calvins admonition* touching *Anabaptisme*, may not be unseasonable, *meri ò debet nobis esse suspectum, quicquid à tali officina prodierit. Opuscul: in Psychopannychia. Pag.* 411. *S.* 11.

There are some who though they graunt the Baptisme of some Children, yet utterly deny the continuance of that Covenant-mercy of God to their succeeding Generations, though the Church-society whereof they were Members be not dissolved, nor the surviveing posterity so much as deserve to be, by the Discipline of Christ in his Church, excommunicated; This seems in truth to arise from their not acknowledging sufficiently, or not abiding by the true genuine grounds of the Baptisme of those whose right to Baptisme is acknowledged by them.

For the information (therefore) of the minds of the weak and stablishing their hearts in this Truth of God, according to the Scriptures, even in the Doctrine of *Pædobaptisme* (a Doctrine of so great concernment, and of so much comfort and incouragement, both to believing parents & their children, not in life only but in death; whence it is that they only can be preserved against sorrowing *when they fall asleep*, as others do, *which have no hope*) This ensuing Treatise is at the earnest request of many worthy freinds to the Author of it (of blessed memory) now published, wherein we may see both; 1. *The Membership of the Children of Church-Members proved to be of Divine institution*, and likewise 2. (among other things) *The continuance of the Membership of those Children, in particular Churches, when they are grown up, even until they are excommunicated, unless there be a dissolution of the person by death, or of the Church-society*: So that this latter is not a principle of Innovation, and Apostacy; but as it was the Judgment of the Author of this following Letter (as is therein to be seen and to manifest which was one speciall end of the Printing thereof) so was it the light which others have held forth, who in their time were Stars not of the smallest magnitude, whom we have here seen sometimes shining with him in Christs right hand, but are now set, and shining with that Sun of righteousness in another World.

Instances hereof see in the preface to the act of the Synod held at Boston. 1662 Touching Baptism & Consociation of Churches.

That there is no cessation of the membership of a person in this or that particular Church (the Church whereof he is a member continuing in being, together with the person himselfe) unles it be by meanes

 of

of a *Church-act intervening*, is a truth of no ſmall importance; And therefore as for that notion which doth obtain with ſome; That in *particular Churches of Chriſt, walking in the order of the Goſpel, there are ſuch* as *become Eccleſiaſtically Felones de ſe*, that is *ſuch Church-members who by their ſcandalous ſin, do become their own executioners Eccleſiaſtically*, cutting themſelves off from the Church, ſo as that they thereby become actually *non-members*, and that the Church hath no more power over them, either *Eccleſiaſtically to admoniſh them*, or *Excommunicate them*; this ſeem's unto me to be but an *humane invention*, and not of *Divine inſtitution*, yea in truth *deſtructive to the Order of the Goſpel*. And therefore to apply it, (as to members in full communion, ſo) to theſe Children of the Church whom we now ſpeak of, is *not of God*; as may appear by theſe reaſons following.

1. Becauſe *it is unſcriptural*. In matters of Gods worſhip, *a negative* argument is concluſive; if that which is aſſerted; be not contained in the Scripture, expreſly, or by due conſequence therefrom, it is to be rejected. *To the Law and to the Teſtimony.*

The Scriptures alledged by ſome, and thought to favour this notion of *Felones de ſe*, are only ſuch as do but lay down before us the *ſinns of ſome Church-members*, and do not ſpeak of the επιτιμια, (*puniſhment or cenſure*) as 'tis called, 2 *Cor.* 2, 6. which in ſuch caſes is to be inflicted, and therefore are not *ad rem*: only that which ſeem's to have moſt weight in it, and to which therefore I ſhall breifly reply, is that in *Acts* 8. 21. *Thou haſt neither part nor lot in this matter*: *Anſwer.* I would not ſay that this text, propounded with reference to the children of the Church that are not in full cõmunion, is not appoſite, becauſe the text ſpeak's of a member in full communion: though to ſay ſo much is accounted by ſome a ſufficient anſwer to ſuch Scripture arguments, as conclude againſt *felones de ſe*, from Church-members that are in full Cõmunion (*quatenus Church-members*) to ſuch Church members as are not in full communion: But yet having gained this ſort; that what is in Scripture ſpoken of a member in full communion, is applicable (as farr as meer membership reacheth) to a member that is not in full cõmunion, we may now the more eaſily proceed in the after diſcourſe. *To this Scripture* (then) *alledged for children of the Church not in full communion, by their*

ſin,

ſin, when adult, to become felones de ſe as above ſaid, I anſwer;

1. *That the objection from hence tend's as much to fruſtrate the Church act, or cenſure of excommunication upon members in full communion*: and makes that ordinance of Chriſt vain, & needleſs to the parents in full cõmunion, as to theſe children. 2. *Theſe words of the Apoſtle Peter, were indeed a dreadfull admonition, and the* Apoſtle *being a Church Officer, did judg this ſinner to deſerve it for his ſimonie*; ſo that he was not (granting the ceſſation of his memberſhip) *felo de ſe*. 3. By [this matter] ſpoken of in the text, ſeem's moſt properly to be meant (*not Church-memberſhip, but*) *the power of giving the holy Ghoſt ſpoken of in the context*, which power *Simon Magus* would have *bought with money*, and for which the *Apoſtle* rebukes him: and therefore his not having *part or lot in that matter*, is to be underſtood directly with relation to that *Extraordinary power*; the Apoſtle would have him know, that he ſhould not ſhare in ſuch a power or priviledge as that was: 4. I would aſk whether, *if a Member of a church be diſcovered not to have his heart right in the ſight of God, but to be in the Gall of bitterneſs and bond of Iniquity*, ſtand convict of *Simonie*, and the wickedneſs be ſo groſly aggravated as this Scandal of *Simon Magus* was; I ſay whether the Church is not bound to bear witnes againſt ſuch an offender by inflicting ſome *Church-Cenſure* (properly ſo taken) upon him? if it be ſaid *nae*; then may it not be queſtioned, whether ſuch a Church would not as well tolerate any other *pollutions* and *deſilements* in it whatſoever? The wofull fruit whereof who is there that doth not eaſily perceive: On the other ſide if it be ſaid *yea*, that the *Church is to Cenſure and Authoritatively to put away from among themſelves ſuch a wicked perſon by excommunication*, I then demand (if this notion of *felo de ſe* be right and ſound) how they can excommunicate one, who is a non-Member before the Church can paſs the ſentence of excommunication againſt him? whether doth this Scripture *Act.* 8. 21. give the Church power over him by it's Diſcipline to cenſure him, who already (as the objection ſpeak's) hath cut himſelf off from being a Church-Member? or whether the Church hath any part in him who hath no part or lot in them, or in theſe matters?

2. Scripture Example lead us, to what is contrary to this *Felonie* ſpoken of: witneſs, under the old-Teſtament, *Iſhmael's* being caſt

out

out, by *Abraham* who was the chief Officer in that family Church. So the inceſtuous perſon under the New-Teſtament is not *felo de ſe* though guilty of ſuch a ſin as was not ſo much as named among the *Gentiles*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 1. but there is a Church-act intervening his ſin and the ceſſation of his *Memberly-Communion* with that *Church*, *viz.* a delivering him [τὸν τοιοῦτον ſuch a one] unto *Satan*. Hence, as the Church of *Epheſus* is commended for not bearing with them which are evill, *Rev.* 2. 2. ſo the Church of *Thyatira* is rebuked for ſuffering that woman *Jezebel*, verſe. 20.

3. Becauſe this notion of *Felo de ſe* takes away the uſe of a Miniſterial Judge in the *Church*, in caſe of the offences, and *Scandals* of this or that particular Member of the Church, to determine of the ſame. Suppoſing a perſon could eccleſiaſtically cut himſelf off from the Church by his very act of ſin, there would then be no room left for a competent Judg to enquire into the crime whereof he is accuſed, and to make particular application of the Rule to the caſe of the ſinning brother, and paſs ſentence according to the true deſert, and nature of the offence. That God hath ordained a miniſterial judge is plain, *Matth.* 18. 17. [if he neglect to hear the Church] the Church is to be heard; the phraſe of our Saviour Chriſt implies judicial ſuperiority on the Churches part, and the inferiority and ſubjection of a part or member to that whole, &c. but now this *Felonie* denieth this order which Chriſt hath eſtabliſhed. Though a perſon deſerve excommunication perhaps, yet it muſt appear that he do deſerve it; neither doth his wickedneſs for which he deſerves excõmunication, render him a non-Member till he be excommunicated; and hence in this caſe is very conſiderable what is aſſerted by that deſervedly famous divine, *Mr. Cotton*, in his book intituled [the keyes of the kingdom of heaven] viz. Though the *jury* have given up their judgment, and verdict, yet the *Maleſactor* is not thereupon legally condemned, much leſs executed, but upon the ſentence of the judge in like ſort here [ſaith he] though the Brethren of the Church do with one accord give up their vote and judgment for the cenſure of an offender, yet he is not thereby cenſured, till upon the Sentence of the *Preſbyterie*.

Cap. 4. *Pag.* 14.

4 Becauſe

4. Becauſe the *binding* and *looſing*, mentioned, *Mat.* 16. 19. the *opening* and *ſhutting* of the doors of the Church by the *keyes of the Kingdom of Heaven*, belong to the ſame power or ſubject: hence therefore as none may intrude himſelfe, or can regularly be admitted or let into this or that particular Church without a Church-act intervening, ſo none can be ſhut out, and deprived of that Membership therein (as aboveſaid,) without an act of the ſame power intervening. *Ejuſdem poteſtatis eſt ligare, & ſolvere; claudere & aperire.* Mr. Cottons keyes *cap.* 7. *pag.* 45.

5. Taken from *Mat.* 18. 15, 16, 17, 18. *Which command and inſtitution, leaves Churches under a ſolemn obligation of duty*, that when this offending Brother or Church-Member deſerveth *excommunication* that *cenſure be duly inflicted on him*; ſo as that thereby (*viz.* the ſentence or cenſure paſt againſt him, in caſe he will not hear the Church) he muſt be to the Church as an *Heathen Man, and a Publican.* ſo that it is not a matter of indifferency, [to be obſerved or not to be obſerved] but after the ſteps taken [mentioned in *verſes* 15, 16.] and the brother remain obſtinate, 'tis Chriſt's Charge that then that *publick proceſs* [verſe 17.] be attended, whereby the offender becomes *eccleſiaſtically bound* according to verſe 18. Chriſt therefore requires a *Church-act* to intervene, as aboveſaid, and ſo the offender is not *felo de ſe.*

6. Becauſe a *ſcandalous Member of a Church, by virtue of Chriſts Inſtitution, Mat.* 18. 17. is to be accounted not as an *Heathen* and *Publican*, but ſtil a *Church-Brother* if he will *hear the Church*, this is clearly intimated in thoſe words *If he neglect to hear the Church*) running conditionally, which ſuppoſe, that if he will hear, he is not to be as an *Heathen i. e.* his Membership ſhall not ceaſe notwithſtanding the Scandalous ſin Committed. Therefore by his wickedneſs and offence he is not *felo de ſe.*

7. Becauſe this *felonie* objected tend's to render that Ordinance of *Church-Cenſure* and *Admonition* laid down *Mat.* 18. 15. *&c.* vain and uſeleſs, for the *felo de ſe*, by his ſin becomeing a *non-Member* and ſo *no Church-Brother*, hence let a private Member of the Church go to tell him his fault, in the ſence of the text, which is in order to more ſolemn *Church-proceeding* and *Judicature*, in caſe he will not hear;

or let the Church require him *in the name of Christ* to hear, in such a Church-way as is there spoken of; he may tell them that he is no *Brother of the Church*, for he hath by his offence *cut off himselfe*, and therefore they have nothing to do with him: that that rule of Christ concernes only the *Brother* or the *Church-Member*, not one that is out of the Church, as he is, being *felo de se*, and therefore may say (according to 1 *Cor.* 5. 12.) *what have you to do to judge me that am without?* If his sin be not yet great enough to render him *felo de se*, & he suspect that therefore the Church may have power over him & is going about to bind him on earth, so that (being thereupon also *bound in heaven*) he shall become bound from an orderly entrance in at the doores of other *Sister-Churches*, without *Repentance* first held forth to the *acceptance of the Church* which he offended; 'tis then but to commit another fault whereby he may be sure he shall be *felo de se*, and so he is beyond the Churches reach, and this frustrates *Church-discipline*, and renders vain that ordinance of Christ above mentioned.

8. To deny the *intervening of this Church-act of Excommunication* is to deny unto, and withold from a person *deserving to be cast out of the Church*, an ordinance, and meanes which may be for the *saving of his soul*, 1 *Cor.* 5.4,5. It is not enough to say that the *felo de se* makes himself *no member*; and so the Church is freed from his communion which would pollute it, as fully as if he were excõmunicated; for *Goa's meanes are not empty or vain meanes*, and to think to reach the full end, but not in *Gods way*, and by observing his *meanes ordained*, is neither *Christian wisdome*, nor *Gospel policy*; yea to deny the application of this ordinãce of excõmunication to the *offending Brother* is to deny a means for the *Salvation of his Soule*, and to deny a remedy for his *Repentance*, and *the healing*, and *gaining* of our Brother again.

9. Because the Holy Ghost command's the Church to *judge them that are within*, 1 *Cor.* 5. 12. *Do you not judge them that are within?* All that are within, are subject to *Ecclesiasticall judicature*, and therefore cannot by Scripture-Warrant be *felones de se*.

10. Because this notion of *felones de se* evacuate's that power given of *Rebuking before all*, 1 *Tim.* 5. 20. which is to be done *without partiality*, (whether they be young, or old, rich or poor &c.) *ver.* 21

and

and ſo likewiſe takes away that Authority given of *reproving with all long-ſuffering*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 2. leaves no room for obedience to that command (2 *Theſ.* 3. 15.) *of Admoniſhing the offender as a Brother &c.* add thereto that this notion of the *felo de ſe* ſuppoſeth ſome *diſobedience in a Church-member of an open ſcandalous nature* againſt which God hath not provided the remedy of ſpiritual revenge in an eccleſiaſticall way, contrary to that 2 *Cor.* 10. 6. where the Apoſtle ſaith, *we have in readineſs to revenge all diſobedience &c.* that this is ſpoken of *Church diſciple* is well cleared by that expreſſion of worthy *Mr. Cotton. viz. the Apoſtles revenge of Diſobedience by way of reproofe in preaching doth not follow the Peoples Obedience, but proceedeth whether the people obey it or no; it was therefore their revenge of diſobedience by way of Cenſure in diſcipline* &c. *Keyes Cha 4 Pag. 15.*

11. The Notion of *felo de ſe* aſſerts *the lawfulneſs of excluſion or ſhutting a Church-Member out of the kingdome of Heaven* by none of the keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven, *viz.* by the ſin of this *felon*, or gives the managing of theſe keyes, in a caſe which concernes the whole to act in (for ſuch is the non-Communion of a Member with the Church) into the hands *ſolely of a private perſon:* both which right reaſon doth plainly condemn.

12. Becauſe were the ſin of a *Church-Member* of as high and heinous a nature as *Hereſie*, nay (which is more) though the Brother of a Church ſhould turn *Heretick* yet he is not immediatly thereby a non-Member, or *felo de ſe:* he is not preſently to be rejected: but a *firſt and ſecond Admonition* muſt be applyed, and in caſe of incorrigibleneſs then follows the *Eccleſiaſtical rejection ſpoken of, Tit.* 3. 10. he muſt be rejected, but according to Gods Order, even the order of the Goſpel: *for all things are to be done in order*, 1 *Cor.* 14. 40. ſo when the Apoſtle required the Corinthians *to put away from among themſelves that wicked perſon*, it is to be underſtood of putting ſuch away, and avoiding ſuch, and withdrawing themſelves from ſuch, and haveing no company with ſuch &c. All in *due ſeaſon*, and all according to the *order of Chriſt*, even according to that rule of *delivering ſuch an one unto Sathan* as is expreſt, 1 *Cor.* 5 and ſuiting with that other command of Chriſt, *Mat.* 18. according as the nature of the offence is more or leſs *heinous*, proportionably is the

admonition to be applyed, either in case the offence be at first private, but growes publick and notorious by the impenitency and obstinacy of the offender; or in case the offence be at first rise of it publick and notorious, still we have no allowance from Scripture to entertain or admit of the Opinion of this Ecclesiastical felonie.

Having thus finished this Discourse I shall now very briefly acquaint the Reader, in a ward or two further, touching the following treatise, viz. that it was written by the Authors own hand: and not three months before the time of his Dissolution, and sent to one who, before the receipt thereof, was not so clear in the point of Infant-Baptisme but was hereby recovered, and stablished in the truth, and dyed in the same Faith as the letter did perswade him, (to use Mr. Fox his Phrase, in his Book of Martyrs, touching that excellent letter which Philpot, that Glorious Martyr, a little before his death also, wrote to a friend of his, that was then a Prisoner, upon this very subject of Infant-Baptisme who was thereby converted from the errour of his way, as is there to be seen. A letter exceeding wel worth the reading & serious perusal by any, such especially as be state in this matter.) The Reader may please further to mind, that this was not intended by the Reverend Author for the publick view; but was only a private Answer sent to a speciall friend, for his particular satisfaction, relating to some doubts mentioned in a letter of his to my Father concerning this subject: Had he purposed to have Written, and Printed off his thoughts to the World touching this article of Baptisme I question not but he would have been more polite and curious; and the expectations of those who knew him throughly satisfied therein.

Act. mon. vol 3. Pag. 606---610. fin.

I would not detain the Reader by any further Preface of mine: and therefore to conclude; May this from one who is now in Heaven, unto such as may have too farr engaged against God's Covenant-meries toward his, and our poor Children, sent indeed in a special manner unto such; have a rich and effectual blessing from the Father of lights & mercies; a better effect upon their hearts, then that famous Letter had of Elijah the Prophet, upon Jehoram to whom it was sent, 2 Chron. 21.12. (written, 'tis thought by divers, before his translation to Heaven, but concealed untill there was so fit a season for the presenting of it) May this Writing (I say) and in such a season also, have a better effect and fruit; even to bring them from the errour of their way, into the paths of Truth and peace, and settle them, and others, more and more therein; That is the sincere desire of the publisher thereof, who is

thine to serve thee in our Lord Jesus.

Thomas Shepard.

I. *THOMAS SHEPARDUS*

Anagr: *Paradiſus hoſtem?*

HEu! Paradiſus *alit Sanctis infantibus* hoſtem?
Quos Baptizari præcipit ipſe Deus?
Quos Deus ambabus, clemens, amplectitur ulnis,
Non ſinet in gremio Tartarus ille ſuo?
Annon pro Sanctis *Eccleſia (mater) habebit,*
Quos ſanctos Sanctos *vox ait eſſe Dei?*
Hæc Deus averſatur. Non ſic Shepardius *olim,*
Non ſic, quæ moriens Scripta reliquit, aiunt.
Non ſic Doctores *celebrat quos ſanctior ætas,*
Anglia *quos celebrat* Priſca, *ſimulque* nova.
His utinam Sanctis Deus ipſe laboribus ornam
E ſuperis, clemens, ſuppeditaret opem!
Quâ ſine, Doctores non ulli, ſcripta nec ulla,
Errores poſſunt carnificare malos.
Jus confirmabas puerorum, Chriſte, *tuorum*
A gremio vellent cum revocare tuo;
Surgito, Lætentesque tuos defendito ab hoſte
Qui vellet hædos (---cunque) perire tuos.

Amen Johannes Wilſonus *ſenior.*

II. THOMAS SHEPARD. *Anagr:*

ô a map's threſh'd.

I Oe her's *a map*, where we may ſee
Well *threſh'd* an heap of corn to be
By *Thomas Shepard's* happy hand
Which from the chaffe pure wheat hath fan'd:
The wheat is the Church-members right
(Both great and little ones) to witt
Unto the ſeal of Baptiſme, all
That are within the Goſpel call;
I mean Believers and their ſeed;
To whom the Lord hath Promiſed,
To be *their God*: and doth reveal
Their right to's Covenant and the ſeal:
On whom through Grace *the Bleſſing* came
Of his dear ſervant *Abraham.*
Be they or *Jewes* or *Gentiles*, now
No difference the Lord doth know.
The promiſe is to us and ours,
As large, or larger: and God pour's
His Spirit now as much, or more
Then e're he did on them before.
And if that they were *Circumciſ'd:*
Then we are now to be *Baptiz'd*:
Our Babes muſt now no leſs then theirs
Be ſeal'd (as of his Kingdome heires)
Chriſt calleth them his little ones,
And as his darlings He them owne's.
Denouncing againſt them a woe,
That are deſpiſers of them, who
Offe'd the leaſt of them, and ſuch
As do their intereſt in him grutch.

Criſpus.

Crispus, with *Gaius*, *Stephanas*,
With others, were not all through Grace
Baptis'd that of their Houshold were?
And Children who will doubt were there?
Then let us not to them deny,
Nor seem as if we did envy
The priviledge which God from heaven
Hath through his grace and favour given.
Nor let us limit his good Spirit
In application of Christ's merrit:
Whose bloud was shed for them, as well
As those who them in age excell:
If such be taught of God, who dare
Deny, they his *Disciples* are?

III. *THOMAS SHEPARD*

Anagr:
More bath pas'd.

More from this holy pen *h th pas'd*
The Baptisme to defend
Of Infants that Church members are
(If well you do attend)
Then any *Anti-baptists* can
with solidness confute.
I wish with all my heart that God
will grant these labours fruit,
As good or better then the paines
by other Godly taken.
That thereby all his precious Saints
he would please to awaken.
That none may any more oppose,
with Zeal preposterous,
The Truth which Gods most holy word
commendeth unto us;
That who were less convinced by
this holy *Shepard's* voice,
Yet in his *Letter* left behind
they may the more rejoyce.
He was a *shining Light* indeed,
few other such are left,
The Lord vouchsafe we be not by
our Sinns of them bereft.
And poure down of his Spirit more
upon his Sons surviving;
That will be more and more unto
Truth's lovers a reviving.

IIII. *THOMAS SHEPARD*

Anagr:
Arm'd as the Shop.

ARm'd (*as the shop* of God's good word
Both weapons unto him afford)
Defend's the right of *little ones*,
Whom God in the Church Covenant ownes
The Children of his Church among,
To whom *his Kingdome* doth belong,
And therewithall the *Seal* thereof,
Through his free Mercy, Grace, and Love.
Yet are there some which them forbid
(As once his weak *Disciples* did)
To come to Christ, and teru, le make,
Whether thereof they should partake?
But Christ was very angry for it,
As for such Zeale he did abhor it;
O: come, said he, and welcom'd such,
With tokens of affection much:
As if that they and scarcely any
But such as they might challenge any
Or part, or portion in his grace,
(So did his favour them embrace)
His Babes, his Lambs, his little creatures
He call's them. As for such d.features,
Christ they defeat as well as them
Whom they presume so to contemn.
This holy *Shepard* is like *David*,
From Lyons mouth, and Beare's who saved
That *little Kid*; whom God did crown
With great and singular renown:
And so this *Shepard* hath (no doubt)
A glorious crown his head about.
For all his labours, (and for this;)
In high and everlasting bliss.
And as the Lord doth honour him
(For Christ his sake) so his esteem
Both is, and ought to be most rare,
'Mongst them who Christ his followers are:
And oh how should we bless his Name,
That on His Son he powr's the same
Good Spirit that was in the Father
Or doubles it upon him rather:
LORD these *Epistles* do thou bless!
And as thy Truth they do confess
So make them precious in the eyes
Of all that do thy Gospel prize.
Amen JOHN WILSON Senior

THE CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP OF CHILDREN

CLEARED UP IN A LETTER IN ANSWER To the Doubts of a Friend.

WHen we say, That Children are Members by their Parents Covenant, I would premise three things for Explication.

1. That Children of Godly Parents come to the *fruition* of their Membership by their Parents Covenant, but that which give's them their *right*, and interest in this Membership is Gods Covenant, whereby he engageth himselfe equally to be a *God to them, and to their Seed.* This I suppose is clear.

2. That according to the double *Seed*, viz. 1. *Elect Seed*, 2. *Church-Seed*; So there is a double Covenant, 1. *External and outward*: 2. *Internall and inward.* And becaufe the Covenant makes the Church, hence there is an inward, and outward Membership, and Church estate: there is an *outward Jew*, & an *inward Iew, Rom.* 2.28, 29. All are not *Israel* (*i. e.* the elect Seed) that are of *Israel* (*i. e.* the Church-Seed or in outward Covenant) to whom the Apostle saith belong's *the Adoption, the Covenants, and the promises*, that is, the externall Adoption whereby God account's them his Children, or the Children of his house, and family, the Children of the Church; and accordingly have the promises belonging to them in respect of outward dispensation, although they be not Children by internall Adoption, to whom belongs the promises by effectuall and speciall communication of saving Grace: It is clearer then the day, that many who are inwardly, or in respect of inward Covenant, the Children

of

of the *Devil*, are outwardly, or in respect of outward Covenant, the Children of God, *Isay.* 1. 2. *I have brought up* (*children*, and yet *Rebellious*; and in the next verse they are called [*my People*] (*i. e.* by outward Covenant) and yet worse then *the Ox, or Asse: Deut.* 32. 19, 20. they are called *Sons*, and yet *provokeing God* to revengefull Wrath; and *Children*, and yet *without Faith*. And look, as some may be externally *Dogs*, and yet internally *Believers*: (as the woman of Canaan, whom, in respect of outward Covenant, Christ calls a *Dog*: and the *Jewes*, who yet rejected him. *Children Mat.* 15. 26) so many may be externally Children, in respect of external Covenant, and yet internally *Dogs*, and evil men, and we see that the purest Churches of Christ are called *Saints*, and faithful, & Children of God and yet many among them Hypocrites, and unbelievers; because they that in respect of Church estate, and outward Covenant, and profession, are outwardly, or federally Saints; are many times inwardly, and really unsound: Hence therefore it is, that when we say, that Children are in Covenant, and so Church-Members, the meaning is, not that they are alwaies in inward Covenant, and inward Church-Members, who enjoy the inward, and saveing benefits of the Covenant, but that they are in external, and outward Covenant, and therefore outwardly Church Members, to whom belongs some outward priviledges of the Covenant for their inward and eternall good.

These things being clear, I the rather make mention of them, to undermine divers usual objections against the Membership, and Covenant-Interest of Children; as, that they have no saving Grace many times; and that they make no actuall profession of any grace; and that many of them degenerate, and prove corrupt, and wicked *&c.* for suppose all these, yet God may take them into outward Covenant (which is sufficient to make them the Church-Seed, or Members of the Church) although he doth not receive them into inward Covenant, in bestowing upon them saving Grace, or Power to profes it, nay though they degenerate, and grow very corrupt afterward.

3. Because you may question *what this outward Covenant is*, to which the seales are annexed; and under which we shall prove, Children

Children are comprehended; and because the Knowledg of it is exceeding usefull and very pleasant, I shall therefore give a short taste of it, as a light to our after-discourse, especially as it is considered in the largest extent of it. This outward covenant therefore consists chefly of these three branches, or speciall promises:

1. *The Lord engageth himselfe to them, that they shall be called by his Name, or his Name shall be called upon them, as 'tis Isay.* 63. 19. They shall be called *the Sons of God, Hos.* 1. 10. and *the People of God, Deut.* 29. 12. 13. Thou becamest *mine, Ezek.* 16. 8. They may not be his Sons, and People really, and savingly, but God will Honour them outwardly (at least) with this name, and priviledg: they shall bear his name, to be called so, and consequently to be accounted so by others, and to be reckoned as of the number of his visible Church, and People; just as one that Adopts a young Son, he tels the Father if he carry it well toward him when he is grown up to years, he shall possess the inheritance it selfe, but yet in the mean while he shall have this favour to be called his son, and be of his family, and household, and so be reckoned among the number of his Sons: *c. Rom.* 9 4.

2. *The Lord promiseth that they shall, above all others in the World, have the meanes of doing them Good, and of conveying of the speciall Benefits of the Covenant; May they shall be set apart above all People in the World, to enjoy these speciall benefits of Remission of Sins, power against sin, eternall life, &c. and shall certainly have these, by these meanes, unless they refuse them*: this is evident from these, and such like Scriptures and examples; what privilege hath the Jew saith the Apostle *Rom.* 3. 1. *and what advantage by Circumcision, if by nature under wrath,* and sinfull for upon that ground the Apostle make's the question, he Answers 'tis *much every way* but *chiefly because to them were committed the Oracles of God*: i. e. the Word, promises, Covenant which are the ordinary meanes of saving grace and eternall good: others hear the word but these in our Land Covenant *enjoy the Covenant, and promises*; and hence these in the first place, and principally are sought after by these meanes; and therefore Christ forbids his Disciples at first to go preach in the way of the *Gentiles* (persons out of Covenant) but to *the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Mat.* 10 6. and

himselfe tells the Woman of *Canaan*, that he came not but to *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, *Mat.* 15.24. And although he bid's his disciples go preach to all nations, yet *Acts* 3.26. it's said unto you *First* hath he sent Christ, because you are *children of the promise* and *Covenant*, verse 25: *Repent therefore, and be converted*, verse 19. Do not resist, or refuse Christ, for he hath *First* sent Christ to you *to bless you, and turn you from your iniquities*; and the promise is full and fair, *Rom.* 11.23. *If they abide not in unbeliefe*, (*i.e.* in refusing grace, and Christ when offered) *they shall be graffed in*, for God is able to do it, and will do it: and the reason why the Lord gave his people up to their own counsells; it was, because *My people would none of me*, after all the meanes God used for their good, *Psal.* 81.11,12,13. And *Deut.* 7.6. *The Lord hath chosen you, above all people on the earth, to be a special people to himselfe, and thou art an holy people unto the Lord*: How a holy people? by inward holiness? no verily, for many of them were inwardly unholy, both Parents and children, but thou art *holy*, *i.e.* thou art externally sanctified, and set apart by special meanes of holiness, to be a special people unto God. And therefore *Isay* 5.7. *the men of Judah* are called Gods *pleasant plant*: *i.e.* planted into the root and fatness of the Church, and therefore had all meanes used for their further special good, *verse* 4. *What could bee done to my vineyard, that hath not been done?* And hence it is, that though the word may come to heathens as well as Church-members, yet it comes not to them *by way of Covenant*, as it doth to Church-members; nor have they any promise of mercy aforehand, as Church-members have; nor is it *chiefly* belonging to such, but unto the children of the Covenant & the promise, as hath been said. And hence also it follow's that God never cutt's off the seed of his Servants from the special benefits of the Covenant untill they have had the meanes thereunto, and they have positively rejected those meanes: and hence the Jewes (who are made the Pattern of what God will do toward all Gentile-churches, *Rom.* 11.) were never cast off till by positive unbelief they provoked the Lord to break them off, by rejecting and refusing the meanes of their eternal peace

3. *The Lord promiseth, that the seed of his people (indefinitely considered) shall have this heart (viz: which would refuse special grace, and mercy) taken away*, as well as meanes used for that end: this is evi-

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dent from *Deut.* 30.6. *The Lord thy God will Circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord*: he will cut off the uncircumcision, and sin, and resistance of the heart against God; he will *take away the stony heart*: not indeed from all, in outward Covenant *particularly*; but from these *indefinitely*; so that there is no promise to do this for any out of the visible Church, (though God of his Soveraignty, and free mercy sometimes doth so) but the *promise* of this *belongs* indefinitely to those of his Church, among whom usually, and ordinarily he worke's this great work, leaving him to his own freeness of secret mercy, to work thus on whom he will, and when he will: in the mean while no man can exclude himself, or any others within this Covenant from hope of this mercy, and grace, but may with comfort look and pray for it; for *this is Gods Covenant that the Redeemer shall come out of Sion, and turn away ungodlyness from Jacob*, *Rom.* 11. 26, 27. for the Covenant of God doth not only run thus; If thou believe and receive grace thou shalt have it; but thus also, I will Circumcise your heart, I will take away the stony heart, I will turn away ungodlines from you, I will enable to believe: And hence these three things follow from these things thus opened.

1. That as the Covenant run's not only thus, viz. *If thou believest thou shalt be saved*, but also *I will enable to believe*; So a mans entrance into Covenant is not only by actual and personal profession of Faith [as some say] because God's Covenant run's a peg higher, viz: to make and enable some to believe, and so to make that profession.

2. That the very outward Covenant is not *meerly conditional*, but there is something *absolute* in it: and hence it follow's, that it is a great mistake of some who think that Circumcision, and Baptism, seal only conditionally [the outward Covenant being [say they] meerly conditionall] for those three things mentioned in the outward Covenant you see are in some respect absolute, and if the Covenant was only conditionall, then the Lord was no more in Covenant with Church-Members, than with pagans, and infidels, for it may be propounded conditionally to all such, that if they believe, they shall be saved, but assuredly God's grace is a little more extensive to the one, then to the other.

3 Hence you may ſee what *Circumciſion* once did, and *Baptiſme* now *ſeal's* unto, even to Infants the ſeal is to confirm the Covenant: the Covenant is, that God (outwardly at leaſt) owne's them, and reckon's them among his people, and Children, within his viſible Church and Kingdome, and that here upon he will prune, and cutt, and dreſſe, and water them, and improve the means of their eternal good upon them, which good they ſhall have, unleſs th y refuſe in reſiſting the means; nay that he will take away this refuſeing heart from among them indefinitely, ſo that though every one cannot aſſure himſelf, that he will do it particularly for this or that perſon, yet every one, through this promiſe, may hope, and pray for the communication of this grace, and ſo feel it in time.

Theſe things thus premiſed, to clear up the enſuing diſcourſe, I ſhall now do two things. 1. Leave a few grounds and reaſons to prove, *that Children are in Church-Covenant, and ſo enjoy Church-Memberſhip by their parents.* 2. I ſhall then *Anſwer your ſcruples.*

To the firſt; The truth of it is manifeſt, by clearing up this propo-
Argum: 1. ſition; *viz:* *That one and the ſame Covenant which was made to Abraham in the old Teſtament, is for ſubſtance the ſame with that in the New; and this under the new-Teſtament, the very ſame with that of Abraham's under the old.*

I ſay for Subſtance the ſame, for it is acknowledged that there was ſomthing *proper* and *perſonal* in *Abraham's* Covenāt, as *to be a Father of many Nations*, but this was not of *the Subſtance* of the Covenant, which belong's to all the Covenanters, and unto which the *Seal of Circumciſion* was ſet: for all Abraham's ſeed, neither in thoſe, nor theſe dayes, are the fathers of many nations, nor did Circumciſion ſeal it.

Again it is confeſſed, that the *external adminiſtrations* of this one & the ſame covenant, are diverſe; but ſtill *the Covenant for ſubſtance* is the ſame: For that old covenant was diſpenſed with other external ſignes, ſacrifices, types, propheſies, then this under the new. There was ſomething Typical in Abraham's covenāt concerning *Canaan*, a type of heaven, but yet the ſame Covenant remaine's now with a more naked manner of diſpenſation, or promiſe of heaven. And hence it follow's, that if it may appear, that the Covenant it ſelf is one and the ſame, now, as then; then, as now; then it will undeniably

follow,

follow, that if the New Covenant under the Gospel be not a *carnal* Covenant, no more was that: if the new-Covenant be not proper to Abraham's *natural seed*, no more was that which was made with Abraham: if the substance of that Covenant was, *I will be a God to thee and thy seed*, then this very Covenant remaine's still under the Gospel, it being one and the same with that; if by vertue of that Covenant, the Children were made *Members of the Church*; and hence had a Church priviledge, and seal administred; then the same Covenant remaining the same, and in the same force, and benefit, *our Children* also are taken into *the like Membership*. It remaine's therfore to prove that which all our Divines have long since made good against the Papists, *that the Covenant then, and now, is for substance one and the same*; or that the Covenāt made with Abraham was a Gospel-Covenant, and this Gospel-Covenant the same that was made with Abraham.

1. *The Covenant made with Abraham is renewed in the Gospel*, as to the main thing in it, *viz: I will be their God, and they shall be my people, Heb.* 8.10. *Jer.* 31.33. and though *the seed* be not expreſt, yet its understood, as 'tis *Gen.* 17.8. & if need be shall be proved hereafter.

2. *Because Abraham's Covenant is of Gospel & eternal priviledges.* Not proper therefore to him, and his fleshly posterity. For *righteousness by Faith* was sealed up by Circumcision *Rom.* 4.11. which is a Gospel priviledge, and is the ground of all other priviledges, and yet in *Gen* 17.7. there is no expression of this righteousness by Faith, but it is understood therefore in this, I will be their God; So the promise of eternal life, and resurrection therunto is wrapt up in this, *I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*

3. *Because there was never any Covenant, but it was either of Grace or workes*: that of workes on mount *Sinai*, that of Grace which was made with *Abraham*: and hence *Gal.* 3 17, *The Covenant which was confirmed afore by Christ, the Law 430 years after cannot disannull*: and what was that Covenant before? surely it was the Covenant of *Grace*, becaus it was confirmed by *Christ*: and what was this Covenant confirmed by Christ, but the Covenant made with *Abraham*? for of this the Apostle speakes, verses 14, 16. And he cal's it expresly by the Name of *Gospel*, or the Gospel-Covenant, verse 8, 9.

4. Because *when God reneweth his promise and Covenant made with Abraham, with his people at the plaines of Moab*, Deut. 30. 6. it run's in these words, *viz: I will Circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed*, now this is a *Gospel* priviledg, and a *Gospel-Covenant*: as appeares by comparing this text with *Rom.* 10. 8. wherin *the righteousness of faith*, or the Gospel, is brought in speaking the words of this Covenant, saying *the word is nigh thee, in thy heart & mouth*, *Deut.* 30. 11, 12, 13, 14. Now if that place, Gen. 17. 7. should be said to be obscure concerning the promise [I will be a God to thy seed] yet here in this place God speak's plainly, which by comparing the scriptures is a Gospel promise, and of a Gospel priviledge and therefore to be preach't by Ministers of the Gospel, and to be believed by the professors of it.

5. *Because this promise* [I will be a God to thee and thy seed] *doth not belong to Abraham & his seed as after the flesh*, or as lineally descended of Abraham: *but as believers*, and this is most evident *Rom.* 11. wherein 'tis said of the Jews, 1. That they were *broken off*, (made no people, no Church) *by unbeliefe*, verse 20. 2. That by *Faith* they shall be grafted in again, verse 23. If therefore they were broken off the Church by *unbeliefe*, then they stood as members of the Church by *Faith*: and if by faith they should be grafted in, then they stood by faith at first: Again it is said in this *Rom* 11. 28. that they are *loved for the Fathers sakes*, surely not as *natural* fathers, but as *spiritual by faith*: and hence *Nehem.* 9. 8. it is expressly said, that *God found Abraham faithfull before him*, and made a Covenant with him.

Again if the posterity of Abraham were Members upon this ground only or chiefly, *viz.* because they were *lineally descended of Abraham*, then *Esau, Ishmael*, *the Jewes Rom.* 11. 20. could never have been cast off from being Members of the Church, because they were alway the natural off-spring & posterity of Abraham. Hence therfore it follow's that if they were ingrafted in the Church *as Believers* (the Fathers as actually believing, the Children as sett apart by promise of God to be made to believe, and in their Parents Faith accounted believers) then all believers at this day have the same priviledg, and the Covenant then being made only in respect of Faith, must needs be Gospel Covenant, the same with God's Covenant at this day. And

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hence alſo it follow's that if they were Members as Believers, then not as Members of that nation. They were not therefore members of the Church, becauſe they were deſcended of Abraham, and were in a national Church, and were by generation Jews. Circumciſion was a Seal of Righteouſneſs by Faith, *Rom.* 4. 11. therefore they were ſealed as believers.

Thus much for the firſt argument, wherein I have been the larger, becauſe much light is let in by it, to anſwer divers miſtakes I ſhall name the reſt with morerbrevity.

Argum: 2. *If it was the curſe of Gentiles, to be ſtrangers to the Covenants of promiſe (made with the Jews) before they became the Churches of God; then by being Churches, this Curſe is removed*; and hence *Ephe.* 2. 12,13. The Apoſtle ſaith they *were ſtrangers to the Covenant*, and *Common-wealth of Iſrael*, but are not ſo now. If you ſay that the *Epheſians* were in Covenant, but not their ſeed, and ſo they were not ſtrangers? *I Anſwer* that the Apoſtle doth not ſet out their curſed eſtate meerly becauſe they were without *any Covenant*, but becauſe they were ſtrangers to *that Covenant* of promiſe which the *Iſraelites* had; for if their children had it not, they were then as without Covenant, ſo without God, and without hope, as Pagans are, which is notoriouſly croſs to the current of all Scripture, as may afterward appear.

Argum: 3. The Apoſtle expreſly ſaith [*Your children are holy*] 1 *Cor.* 7. 14. *and if federally holy, then of the Church*, [for *reall* holyneſs cannot be here meant] *and in the Covenant of it*: even as 'tis ſaid *Deut.* 7. 6. thou art *an Holy people unto the Lord thy God*: few of which number were *really and ſavingly* holy, but they were all ſo *federally*, or *by Covenant*, and ſo became Gods ſpecial Church or people.

If you ſay, That this holineſs is meant of *matrimonial holineſs, viz.* that your children are not *baſtards*, but *legitimate*: The *anſwer is eaſy*; for upon this interpretation the Apoſtle's Anſwer ſhould be falſe; for then if one of the parents had not been a Believer, and ſo by his Believing Sanctifyed his unbelieving Wife, their Children muſt have been Baſtards, whereas you know that their Children had not been in that ſence unclean or illegitimate, although neither of them were Believers: for the Apoſtle's diſpute is plain, *viz.* that if the

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Believing Husband did not Sanctify his unbelieving Wife, *then were your Children unclean, i. e.* say you *Baſtards*, but it's evident that Children may be, in this ſenſe, clean, and yet no Faith in either Parent to Sanctify one another to their particular uſe: unleſs you will ſay, that all Children of heathens are Baſtards, becauſe neither of the parents Believe.

Argum. 4. *Rom.* 11.17. *The Jews are cut off from the fatneſs of the Olive tree, and the Gentiles put in, or ingraffed in their room*: Now this *Ingraffing* is not into Chriſt by *ſaving faith*, for it is impoſſible that ſuch ſhould ever be broken off, who are once in; it muſt therefore be meant of their ingraffing into the *external ſtate of the viſible Church*, and the fatneſs and priviledges thereof; of which Church Chriſt is the external and political head, into whom (in this reſpect) they are ingraffed by *external viſible Faith in Covenant*. Hence thus I reaſon; That if the *Jews* and their *Children* were ingraffed members of the Church, then the *Gentile Children* ingraffed into the ſame ſtate, and comming in their room, are together with their *Children*, members of the Church: but the *Jews* hereafter ſhall be called, they ſhall be ingraffed in as they were before; them and their ſeed, *verſe* 23. In the mean while, the Apoſtle put's no difference between the preſent ingraffing of the Gentiles now, and of theirs paſt, or to come, and therefore they, and their ſeed are ingraffed Members now.

Argum. 5 *Becauſe there is the ſame inward cauſe, moving God to take in the Children of believing Church-members into the Church, and Covenant now, to be of the number of his people, as there was for taking the Jews and their children*: for the only cauſe why the Lord took in the Jews and their Children then, was *his Love*, and free grace, and mercy *Deut.* 4.37. *becauſe he Loved thy fathers, therefore he choſe their ſeed*, which chooſing is not by eternal Election or choſing to glory, for many of their ſeed never came to Glory; but unto this priviledg to be his people above all others, in outward Covenant with him; which is exceeding great Love, if you Remember what hath been ſaid of the bancles of this outward Covenant, and viſible Church eſtate. And hence *Deut.* 10.15. *he put the Lord had a delight in thy fathers, hence he choſe their ſeed* above all people, as at that day, viz. to

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be his people: so that I do from hence fully believe, that either God's love is in these dayes of his Gospel less unto his people and servants, then in the dayes of the old Testament, or if it be as great, that then the same Love respects the seed of his people now, as then it did. And therefore, if then, because he loved them, he chose their seed, to be of his Church; so in these dayes, because he loveth us, he chooseth our seed, to be of his Church also.

Argum: 6. *Because our Saviour speaks plainely of all Children who are brought to him, that of such is the Kingdom of heaven*: and none are ordinarily heires of the Kingdom of Glory, but such as are of God's visible Church and Kingdom here. The objections against this place, I think not worth confuting, because I hope enough is said to clear up this first particular, to prove the children of confederate believers to be in Covenant, and Church-members.

I now proceed to the second thing, *viz*: to answer your objections.

Object: 1. *If Children (say you) be members as it was in Abraham's Covenant, then wives and servants, and all the household are to be taken in; for so it was, Gen.17. & Gen.35.2.3. and then what Churches shall we have? but such as you fear, God will be weary of & angry with.*

Answ. Churches at first (by your own confession) were in *families*, where therfore God's grace did the more abound, by how much the less it did abound abroad: And hence *Abraham's family* and household was *a Church* of God; but yet consider withall that all were not of this Family-church, meerly because they were *of the family* or household, but because they were *Godly*, or *the children* of such as were godly in the family; for *Abraham's* servants and household were such as he could and did *Command to keep the way of the Lord*, and so were obedient to God in him. *Gen.*18.19. and we see they did obey, and did receive that new, strange, & painfull signe of *Circumcision*: about the nature and use of which, no doubt he first instructed them, and in the place you mention, *Gen.*35.4. they *gave to Jacob all their strange gods, & earrings* to worship God more purely. And it's evident, *Exod.*12.45 that every one in the family had not to do with the seales of the Church, & therefore now not of the Church though of the family: for *a foreigner, or hired servant* was not to eat of the *passover*: nor was every one who was *bought with money* to eat of it

until they were *Circumcised*, ver. 44. nor were any such to be circumcised until they were *willing & desireous* to eat the Passover, & that unto the *Lord*; then indeed they, & theirs were first to be *Circumcised*, *vvt.* 48. and although this be not expressly set down, *Gen.* 17. in Abrahams family; yet I doubt not, but that, as one Scripture gives light unto another, so, this Scripture in *Exo.* shews the mind of God in the first beginning of the Church, as well as in these times: if therefore the servants who were godly in the family, were only to be *circumcised*, and *their children* born in the house with them, then this example is no way leading to corrupt Churches, as you fear it will; but rather the contrary, that if *Proselyte servants* then, were received into the Church together with their seed, much more are they received now: And if they did not defile the church then, neither should we think that they will do so now. And I beseech you consider of it, that God was then as carefull of keeping his Church holy as in these dayes, especially in the first constitution of it, as in this of Abrahams *Gen.* 17. And hence God was as much provoked by their unholiness then, as by any unholiness now, 1 *Pet.* 1. 16. Suppose therefore (as you imagine) that all the household, whether prophane or holy, were to be received into the Covenant, and so to the seal of it, do you think that this course of admitting all prophane persons then, would not make the Lord soon weary of, and angry with those family-churches, as well as of national, or congregational now, upon the like supposition? if therefore any servants born in the house, or hired, were admitted, surely they were not such unholy ones, whom the Lord could not but be as much angry with, then as now; but they were godly and holy at least in outward profession, upon which ground the Lord commanded them to be *Circumcised*.

I know there are some, and very holy & learned also, who think that if any godly man undertakes to be *as a father* to an *adopted Pagan or Indian*, that such an one, not grown up to yeares, is from the example in *Gen.* 17. to be received into the Covenant of the Church, and the seale of it: and I confess, I yet see no convicting argument against it, if it could be proved that some servants bought with Abraham's money were such, and were under years, but I see as yet no convicting argument for this assertion from this example; and therefore

I shall

I ſtick to the former anſwer, and ſee no reaſon, from any rule of charity, but to believe that all thoſe in Abrahams family, were either viſibly godly, or the children of ſuch; to whom Circumciſion belong's: and conſequently might as well partake of Church-memberſhip, as Abraham himſelf; which ſort of ſervants in theſe dayes may as well be admitted to Church-memberſhip, without fear of defiling the Church, as their maſters themſelves.

Object: 2. *If Children (ſay you) be members, then all Children, good and bad, muſt be received, as Jacob and Eſau were:*

Anſw. Why not? for if there be any ſtrength in this Argument, it holds as ſtrongly againſt the admiſſion of profeſſing viſible believers: where, though all are *externally*, and federally holy, yet ſome, yea many, yea the greateſt part of ſuch may be *inwardly bad*, and as prophane in their hearts, as Eſau: and muſt we therefore refuſe them to be Church-members becauſe many of them may be inwardly bad? verily there muſt then never be Churches of God in this world. So 'tis among children, they are all outwardly holy, yet many of them may be inwardly unholy, like Eſau, muſt we not therfore accept them to Memberſhip? It is a miſerable miſtake to think that inward reall holyneſs is the only ground of admiſſion into Church-Memberſhip, as ſome *Anabaptiſts* diſpute, but it is federal holyneſs, whether externally profeſſed as in grown perſons, or graciouſly promiſed unto their ſeed.

Reply 1. *But you here Reply, If ſo, then they are of the Church when they are grown up, and prophane, untill they are caſt out:* and to take in prophane, is ſinfull, *Ezek.44.*

Anſw. It is very true; For 'tis herein juſt as 'tis in admitting profeſſing believers, they may prove prophane, and continue ſo in Church-memberſhip, untill they are caſt out; but is this therefore any ground to keep out thoſe who are perſonally holy by their own profeſſion? no verily, why then ſhould ſuch as are parentally, and federally holy be kept out from Church-Memberſhip becauſe they *may prove prophane*, and being prophane muſt *remain Church-Members* till they be caſt out.

Reply 2 *But then (you ſay) they muſt be Church-Members though their Parents themſelves, and the whole Church be unwilling thereunto,*

even as (say you) a man that marrieth a woman, her children must be his, and he be a Father to them, though he and she, and they should say he shall not be a father in law to them.

Answ. This similitude of marriage doth neither prove, nor illustrate the thing; For the relation between father and such children is absolute & natural, and hence continues though they say he shall not be their father, and though he profess he will not; but the relation founded upon Church-covenant, between member and member, is not natural, nor only, and allway absolute; but also conditionall, which condition not being kept, the relation may be, and is usually broken; for look as the *Jews* were not so absolutely God's people, but if they did in time *reject* the Gospel, they were to be cast off, and indeed are so at this day, *Rom.*2.25. *Hosea* 2.2. *Acts* 13.46, 51. So 'tis with all Gentile Churches, and the members thereof: & as for that which you last say, That *they may refuse their Parents Covenant at age, as well as own it, and so may members go out at pleasure*, which is disorder. *I answer*, That the like may be said of such members as come in by personal profession, for they may renounce their own Covenant with God and the Church, one may doe so, and so may twentie, yet though this be wickedness and disorder, yet the Church may proceed against them, and so it may against their Children, who are bound to own the Covenant made with God, and of God with them in their Parents, as well as any Church-Members are to own their own Covenant by their own personal profession. What disorder therfore will come in as you conceive this way will come in by your own way, and what course you should take to heal the one, by the same you may heal the other.

Object. 3. *If Children (say you) be members; then their seed successively, until they be either dissolved, or excommunicated; and if so, then what Churches shall we have?*

Answ. 1. What Churches shall we have? Truely not allway Churches of Angels and saints, but mixt with many chaffy hypocrites and oft times prophane persons. But still I say this objection holds as firm against gathering Churches of visible professing believers; For God knowe's what Churches we may have of them, even heaps of hypocrites, and prophane persons, for I know not what can give

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us hope of their not apostatizing, but only Gods promise to *be a God to them*, and to preserve them; and truly the same promise, being made to *their seed*, gives me as much ground of faith to hope well of Churches rising out of the seed of the godly, as of the professing Parents themselves. I know one may have more *experimental charity* concerning some few professing the fear of God, but my *Church-charity* is equal about them, especially considering, that those whom God receiv's into Church Covenant, he doth not only take them to be a people to him, but to *establish* them to be such, *viz.* for time to come. And hence God is said, to *establish his Covenant with Isaac*, not *Ishmael* who was to be rejected, *Gen.* 17.19. and God is said, to gather them into Covenāt to *establish them to be a people*, both young & old, present posterity, and that which was to come, *Deut.* 29.11,--15.

2. God was as Holy, and as exactly requiring holiness from the Jewish Church, as well as from Christian Churches; now do you think that *the Covenant* which then wrapt up the *Jews children* into Church-membership, was an high-way of prophaneſs, and unholyneſs in the members thereof, & of defiling & polluting Gods Church? or was it a way and meanes of holiness, and to keep them from being prophane? to affirm the first is somthing Blasphemous, and very false, for 'tis expressly said *Jer.* 13.11. that *as the girdle cleaveth to the loynes of a man, so he caused the whole house of Israel* (not grown men only) *to cleave to him, that they might be to him a people* (which was by Covenant) *and for a name, for a praise, and for a glory*; Gods name, Glory, praise was the end; and the Covenant was the meanes hereunto; and therefore it was no way or meanes of unholyneſs in that Church: but if you say, it was a meanes of holiness; why then should we fear the polluting of Churches by the same *Covenant*, which we have proved, wraps in our seed also? indeed they did prove universally prophane in the Jewish Church; so they may in ours, but shall man's wickedness in abuseing God's grace, and forsaking his Covenant tye the hands, or heart of God's free grace from taking such into Covenant; *what if some did not Believe?* saith the Apostle, *Rom.* 3.3,4. *shall their unbelief make the Faith of God without effect? God forbid.*

3. Suppose they do prove prophane, and corrupt Churches; yet

even then, when they are corrupt, they are such Churches, where *ordinarily* God gathers out his *Elect*, and out of which (till purer are gathered, or these wholly rejected) there cannot be expected *ordinarily* any salvation: for so saith our Saviour, *salvation is of the Jews*, *John* 4.22. even in that very corrupt, and worst estate of the Church that ever it was in.

Object. 4. *If children be members, then they must come to the Lords Supper, for you know no difference between member and member, in point of priviledge, unless they be under some sin.*

Answ. 1. Yes verily, there is a plain difference between member and member (though professing believers) in point of priviledge, though they lie under no sin: for, a *man* may speak and prophesy in the Church, not *Women*. A company of *Men* may make a Church, and so receive in, and cast out of the Church, but not *Women* though professing Saints.

2. All grown men are not to be admitted (though professing Believers) to the *Lords Supper*; my reason is; A man may Believe in Christ, and yet be very ignorant of the nature, use, and ends of the Lords Supper, now such may be *Baptized* as soon as ever faith appeares, *Mark* 16.16. but they may not be admitted to the *Lords Supper*, because they will be *guilty of the body and bloud of the Lord*, if they through their ignorance, cannot *discern the Lord's body*. I know no reason but ignorant persons may be as well suspended from the use of this priviledge, though they be true believers (for faith may consist with much ignorance) as well as distracted persons, who notwithstanding may be believers also.

3. If therefore children be able to *examine themselves and discern the Lords body*, they may then eat; and herein there is no difference in this priviledge between member and member.

4. Children not being usually able to *examine themselves, nor discern the Lords body*, hence they are not to be admitted to the use of *this priviledge*: and yet they may be such *members* as may enjoy the benefit of other priviledges even that of *Baptisme*; for *baptisme* seales up our *first entrance* into the Covenant. This first entrance is not allway by personal *profession* of Faith, but by Gods *promise* of working, or of vouchsafeing the meanes of working of it, now Children, as is

proved

proved) being under this Covenant (as we ſee all the poſterity alſo of Abraham was) hence though children cannot profeſs faith, nor actually examine themſelves, yet they may receive, and muſt receive *baptiſme*, being allready under Gods Covenant; but becauſe the *Lords Supper* doth not ſeal up this firſt entrance, and firſt right to the Covenant, but our *growth and fruition* of the Covenant; hence this act on our part is required to participate in this, which the Apoſtle calls ſelf-examination, and the act of *taking*, and *eating* Chriſt, and of *diſcerning the Lords body*, and of *doing this in remembrance* of Chriſt: which every baptiſed perſon, and Church-member is not allway able to do. A child may receive a promiſe aforehand of a rich eſtate given him, and this promiſe ſealed up to him, his father receiving it for him, but it is not fit that he ſhould be put to the actual improvement, and fruition of that eſtate, untill he is grown up, underſtands himſelfe, and knows how to do it: ſo 'tis here, the Sacrament of the Lords Supper requires ability, 1. To take Chriſt as our own. 2. To eat Chriſt, that is, to take fruition of him: the which acts of faith, God doth not require of all thoſe immediately, who are wrapt up in Covenant with him.

Object. 1. *But here you ſay, that that examination* 1 Cor. 11. *is required of all that be members, and that at all times, as well as at their firſt comming to the Lords Supper.*

Anſw. This examination is indeed required of all thoſe members whoſhould partake of the Lords Supper, but it is not required (as you ſeem to ſay) of every one to make him a *member*, ſo that none can be a member, but him that is able to examine himſelfe; for Gods Covenant to work faith, and to give power to examine one's ſelfe afterward, may make ſome as truely members as thoſe who are able to act & expreſs their faith. Now I have proved that Gods Covenant is aforehand given to children: and to give them the ſeal of their firſt entrance into it many yeares after, is as vile a thing, as for them that are able, and fit to examine themſelves, to have this Sacrament of the Lords Supper denied, or delaied till many yeares after.

Object. 2. But you ſay, *It's left to every ones conſcience to examine himſelf, not that others ſhould examine them, and conſequently if children be members, then it muſt be left upon their conſcience.*

Anſw.

Answ. We know in our own consciences that Children usually cannot examine themselves, now if the Elders & the Church are bound to see Christs rules observed by others, and if this examination be the rule that all must walk by who participate here, then they must not suffer such yong ones, no nor persons grown up, and entred in by personal profession, to receive this seal, as they know are unable thus to do: I think if Churches should degenerate in these dayes, this course of Discipline should be attended (especially by *the Elders*) toward any of their members, which way soever they have entred, whether by their own, or by their parents covenant: And I have oft feared that there is some need already of it, even toward some who enter by their own covenant, and may have faith, but are miserably to seek in the *nature, use, and ends of the Lords Supper*, and consequently unfit to *discern of Christ's body*, and so to come to that Sacrament.

Object. 5. *If Children may be members, & yet not come to the Lords Supper; then it may come to pass that a whole Church may be a Church, and yet not have the Lords Supper, or ought not to have it.*

Answ. 1. So there may, for a Church may be a true Church, & yet want the benefit of some one or more of Gods Ordinances, sometime *Pastors*, sometime *Elders*, sometime *Seales*.

2. A Church of professing Believers may degenerate, and turn prophane and sottish, and so have no just right to the Seales; and their Officers may leave them, and so have no use of the *seales*: yet I suppose it is a Church of Christ still though degenerate, though unfit to enjoy *Seales*; will you therfore think the way of *their Membership* unlawfull, *viz.* by professing their Faith? Because such a rare thing as this may happen? why then should you think the way of *Childrens Membership* unlawfull because of the like rarity in such a dark and gloomy state of them as you mention?

Object. 6. *If Children be Members, then there will be many in the Church, who are not Saints by calling, nor faithfull in Christ Jesus, which ought not to be if the Church consist in it, but this may be too plainly seen.*

Answ. 1. I do think it's true, that *poor Children* may be, and are look't upon with too too many *dejected thoughts* of unbelief, *despising* of them as Children of Wrath *by nature*, and not with such *high thoughts*

thoughts of Faith, as Children, and Sons of God by promiſe, as I have ſhewn. And I think herein is our great ſin, as it was in Chriſt's own *diſciples*, who were the firſt, that we read of, that would not have *little Children brought unto him*, for which he rebuked them, ſhewing their priviledge; and for want of which faith in Gods promiſe about our children, certainly God ſmites, and forſakes many of our children.

2. If therefore you think that Church-members muſt conſiſt only of ſaints by calling; ſo that your meaning is, ſuch ſaints as are ſo *by outward and perſonal profeſſion, from the call of the Goſpel*, are only to be Church-members; this is an errour: For, 1. You know that they who define a Church to be a number of viſible ſaints, they uſually put this phraſe in, [*and their ſeed*] who may not profeſs faith perhaps as their Fathers do: and you ſhall find that the *Iſrael* of God under the *old Teſtament*, are all of them ſaid to be *adopted*, *Rom.* 9.4. *choſen and called*, *Iſay* 41.8,9. and *faithfull*, *Iſai.* 1.21. and yet we know they were not all ſo by perſonal *profeſſion*, but in reſpect of their joynt *federation*, and the outward Covenant of God with them. 2. The outward Covenant is not allway firſt entred into by perſonal profeſſion of faith, but by Gods Covenant of promiſe to work, or to uſe the meanes to work faith: Hence it undeniably follows; that as many may be in Church-covenant before they profeſs faith perſonally, ſo many may be members of the Church without this profeſſion of faith; for this Covenant of working faith (as hath been formerly explained) doth not only belong to the Jews, but to Gentile Churches alſo, and Believers; as hath been proved, and might further be confirmed.

Object: But ſay you, *If we ſaw hypocrites, we were to caſt them out as well as prophane perſons: and we ſee no grace in many children, and therefore they muſt not be received in.*

Anſw. 1. If you ſee children, of whom you cannot ſay that they are faithfull perſonally, yet they may be faithfull federally (as hath been ſhewed) for they may lie under Gods Covenant of begetting faith, by ſome meanes in them; and then you are not to caſt them out, but accept them, as God doth.

2. The children of godly parents though they do *not manifeſt faith in the Goſpel*, yet they are to be accounted of Gods Church,

untill they *positively reject the Gospel*, either in themselves, or in their Parents; and therefore God did never goe about to cast off *the Jews, and their seed*, untill they put forth *positive unbeleefe*; the Lord promised to give them the means of Faith, and did so: and when Christ was come, and the Gospel sent first unto them for their good, the Lord herein fullfill'd his Covenant-Mercy, as toward his Beloved people; but when they rejected these meanes, and *cast off* Christ, and his Gospel, then *Rom.* 11. they were *broken off*, and not before. Now hypocrites are such as profess Christ in words, and yet deny Christ in deed, *Titus* 1. 16. 2 *Tim.* 3. 5. Hence they are such as positively refuse Christ: hence the case of children in whom *no positive unbeliefe* appeares, is not the same with this of hypocrites, or prophane persons; and when young Children shall grow positively such, I know not but they may be dealt with as any other Members, for any such like offence.

Thus you see an answer to your *Six Objections*. In the end of your paper there are *TWO QUESTIONS*, which I suppose may not a little trouble against their Baptisme and membership. To these briefly.

Quest. 1. *What good (say you) is it, either for a wicked, or an elect Child, till he be converted, to be in the Church? or what good may any have by being in the Church, till they can profit by what they enjoy?*

Answ. 1 The Apostle put's the like case, and gives you an Answer *Rom.* 3. 1, 2. *what advantage hath the Jew, and what profit is there of Circumcision?* what use or profit could the Infants then make of their Church-Covenant, Membership, or Seal, who understood none of these things? do you think the Lord exposed his holy ordinances then unto contempt? and is more carefull that they may be profitably used now? was there no good by Circumcision? yea saith the Apostle, *much every way*.

2. *What profit is it to persons grown up to yeares, and yet secretly hypocrites, who enter into the Church by profession of the faith?* you will say there is good and profit in respect of the priviledges themselves, but they abusing them they had, in this respect, better have been without them, because they bring hereby upon themselves greater condemnation. The same say I of children, whom God receives into his Church

Church, by promiſe, and Covenant of doing them good, although at preſent they may not be ſo ſenſible of this good.

3. To ſpeak plainly, *the good they get by being thus enriched is wonderfull*: and here there is more need of a *Treatiſe* then of a *Letter*, to clear up the benefits from all Scruples, ariſing by being in outward Covenant, in Church-fellowſhip, even unto Infants: I confeſs I find little ſaid by *Writers* upon this Subject, & I believe the doubts againſt *chilarens Baptiſme*, as they ariſe by blindneſs in this particular; ſo I think that God ſuffers that opinion to take place, that by ſuch darkneſs, he may bring out light in this particular. I will only hint unto you ſome few of my many thoughts, which have long exerciſed me for many yeares in this thing. The *good* by childrens *membership*, eſpecially when *Sealed*, is in four things.

1. *In reſpect of God.* God ſhews hereby the riches of *his grace* toward them, in *taking them to be his people: In adopting them to be his children: In preventing them with many ſpecial promiſes aforehand of doing them good*; by all which, the Lord doth as it were *prevent Satan*, in wooing their hearts as it were, ſo ſoon to draw them to him before he can actually ſtirr to draw their ſoules from him. So that I beſeech you conſider, ſuppoſe they cannot as yet underſtand, and ſo make profit by all this, yet is it not good for them, or for any of us to partake of Gods grace, before we know how to make uſe of it? is it not good for God to be good to them that are evil? is it not good for God to glorifie & make manifeſt his grace to man, though man knowes not how to make uſe of his grace? was it not rich grace for *Chriſt* to waſh *Peters* feet, and yet he not know at preſent what it meant, only (ſaith Chriſt) *thou ſhalt know it afterward?* is it not good for God to give life to us, and to let us be born in ſuch and ſuch a place of the Goſpel where it is preached, and to lay in mercy aforehand for us, before we know how to be thankfull, or know how to uſe any of theſe outward mercies? and is it no mercy or favour to have ſo much ſpiritual mercy beſtowed on children aforehand, before they can be thankfull, or make uſe thereof? *Deut.* 7. 6, 7. The chooſing of them to be his people, above all other people (which you know was from the womb) it's called *Gods ſetting his Love upon them*, and the reaſon of this Love, *verſe* 8. is ſaid to be,

because God loved them, this love was not Electing, & peculiar love, (for thousands of these perished and went to hell) but it was his *external adopting love* to choose them to be his people, and to improve all means for their good, and to give them the good of all those means unless they refuse: and to give indefinitely among them, and particularly to many of them, such hearts as that they shall not be able to refuse the good of those meanes (as hath been shewed formerly) this is love, great love & mercy; not shewn or promised to any who are not of the visible Church throughout the whole world. By which God is glorified, & let him be so, though we cannot see how to profit by it, when it first break's out; Have not you profited much by considering Gods preventing grace, long before you understood how to make use of it? hath not God received much glory from you for it? hath this grace then think you, been unprofitably spent on Gods part? No verily: The case is the same here, David blesseth God, for *being his God from his Mothers belly, and from the womb*, *Psal.*22. 9,10. and Gods grace is shewn through this expression, *Isai.*46.3.

2. *There is much good hereby in respect of the Parents*; for, suppose the children cannot profit by it, yet Parents may, and 'tis in respect of them very much that God looks upon their children, thus to receive them into Covenant, *Deut.*4.37. For, 1. *Parents may hereby see, and wonder at the riches of Gods grace*, to become a God not only to themselves, but to take in their seed also, whose good they prize as their own, and as if done to themselves: hence *Abraham fell down upon his face*, adoring God, when he heard of this Covenant, *Gen.*17. See also how *Moses* aggravates this love, in the eyes of all that had eyes to see, *Deut.*10.14,15. 2. *Hereby God gives Parents some comfortable hope of their childrens salvation*; because they be within the pale of the visible Church; for as out of the visible Church (where the ordinary meanes of salvation be) there is *ordinarily* no salvation, *Acts* 2.47. So if children were not of Christs visible Church and Kingdome, we could not hope for their salvation, no more then of Pagans, or Turks; for if they be *without God*, they are *without hope*, *Ephes.*2.12. and to be without hope of such, to whom God hath made such promises of salvation, not given to Pagans, nor proper to *Abraham*, is very hard, and horrid to imagine; for

for the promiſe run's univerſally, that *the Seed of the upright* (whether Jews, or Gentiles) *ſhall be Bleſſed.* *Pſal.* 112. 1, 2, *Prov.* 20.7. 3. *Hereby Parents are ſtirred up the more earneſtly to Pray for them*, becauſe God's Covenant and promiſe is ſo large toward them, at which Prayer looks, and by which it wreſtle's with God, and hence, we find that *Moſes*, and others, they uſe this argument in their Prayers; oh *God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob: &c:* 4. *Hereby they may not only hope, and Pray, but are incouraged to Believe*, concerning their Children and the reſt of thoſe who are in Covenant among them, that God will do them good, as they conclude *mercy to the remnant, forgiveneſs of their ſins*, with faith, upon this ground, *thou wilt remember the Truth to Jacob, and thy Mercy to Abraham, ſworn unto our Fathers in dayes of old*, *Micah* 7.18,20. This indeed is the childrens faith for themſelves, and their children: but ſo it may be a ground of Parents faith: And if we pray for our children, why ſhould we doubt (leaving only ſecrets to God) if we ſee them dy before they *reject* the Goſpel *poſitively*; I ſee no reaſon for any man to doubt of the ſalvation of his child if he dyes, or that God will not do good to his child in time if he lives. 5. *This ſtirrs up their hearts to be the more ſincerely holy, and keep in with God, becauſe of their children; and to educate them with more care, and watchfullneſs*, becauſe they are the Lord's Children as well as theirs; they are not common, but holy veſſells, and therfore let them ſee that they be not defiled; and hence we find, that when God exhort's to any duty of holineſs in Scripture, he oft makes this the ground of it [*I am your God*] and hence God aggravates their ſin in offering their children to *Molech*, *Ezek.* 16. becauſe they were *his children*, that ſhould have been better uſed.

3. *In reſpect of themſelves, the good is very great.* 1. It is a ſpecial *meanes to prevent ſin*, *Deut.* 29. *I make this Covenant*, not only with him that is preſent, but with your ſeed alſo, who *are not here*, *verſe* 15. *Leſt there ſhould be among you man, or woman, family, or tribe, whoſe heart turnes away from God, and leſt there ſhould be a root of gall and wormwood:* and indeed it mightily workes on the heart to think; ſhall I whom God hath choſen to be his, be my own; or be the Divels, or be my luſts &c? 2. *'Tis a ſtrong motive & ex-*

gagement upon them to forſake ſin, even the uncircumciſion and ſin of their hearts, as is evident, *Deut.* 10.15,16. *The Lord had a delight to chooſe the ſeed of your fathers*, even you to be his people, *as it is this day*: what follow's? *Therefore Circumcuſe the foreskin of your hearts, and be no more ſtiff-necked*: 3. 'Tis a ſpecial help, as to avert their hearts from ſin, ſo *to convert & turn them to God, & to make them look to ward God, that he would turn them*, when perhaps they are without any hope (in other reſpects) of mercy, or of being able by any meanes they can uſe to turn themſelves; this is evident, *Acts* 3.19. with *verſe* 25. *Repent and be converted, for you are the children of the Covenant, which God made with our fathers*; this drawes their hearts, when they ſee, how *God* call's them to return, *Jer.*3.22. *Come unto me ye backſliding children &c: we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* When backſliding *Ephraim* could not convert himſelfe, he cryes unto *God*, oh *turn me, and I ſhall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God*, *Jer.*31.18. which places cannot be meant of being their *God* only by internal Covenant, in giving to them the ſpecial benefits of the Covenant, for then they ſhould be in Covenant with God and have remiſſion of all their ſins, &c: before they were turned, or before faith and therefore it's meant of being a God in outward, and external church-Covenant, which is no ſmal motive, and loadſtone to Believe. And although many do not believe, and will not be turned, yet this Covenant is an high priviledge, and great favour, fitt in it ſelf, to draw to God, though many believe not: and hence *the Apoſtle* ſaith, that the priviledge of the *Jew* is great, in having God's *Oracles* (which contain God's Covenant) *committed* to them, though *ſome believe not*, which unbelief make's not (he ſaith) *the faith of God*, i. e. God's promiſe or Covenant *of none effect*, or an uneffectual, and fruitleſs Covenant: for this word of God's Covenant ſhall take ſome effect among ſome ſuch as are in it; which therfore is a priviledge, though many periſh, as is evident, *Rom.*9.4,6.

4. 'Tis *a ſpecial meanes of binding them faſt to God, when they are turned*: *Jer.*13.11. *as the girdle cleaveth unto a man, ſo have I cauſed the whole houſe of Iſrael, to cleave unto me, that they may be for a name, and glory.* *Deut.*30.20. thou ſhalt cleave unto him, becauſe *he is thy life, and the length of thy dayes*: he was not their life ſpiritually,

and

and savingly, (for many thus exhorted, were dead, and in their sins) but federally, or in outward Covenant. 5. *If they shall forsake, and break loose from God, and from the bond of his Covenant*, and have (as much as in them lies) cast themselves out of Covenant, by their own perfidiousness, & breach of Covenant, that one would think now there is no more hope; *yet it is a special meanes, to encourage their hearts to return again*: even when they seem to be utterly cast off, and therefore it's said *Jer.*3 1. *though thou hast committed whoredome with many lovers* (wherby the covenant was broken) *yet return unto me*: so *Deut.*4. *If when you are scattered among the nations, and shall serve wood & stone, and be in great tribulation, if from thence thou seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, he will not forsake thee*; and what is the reason of it? viz. his remembrance *of the Covenant with their fathers*, for so 'tis *Deut.* 4.27,28,29.30 31. But I forbear to name more such things as these which come by outward Covenant to Unchurched Members.

4. *In respect of others their good is very great*; for, 1. now they may enjoy *the special watch and care of the whole Church*, which otherwise they must want. 2. They hereby have the more *fervent Prayers of others* for their good: and hence *Rom.*9.1,2,3. we see how *Paul* upon this ground had great zeal in his prayers for the Jews, not only because his countrymen, but especially because to them did belong *the Adoption, and Covenants*, & they had gracious Fathers &c. so *Psal.*89.49 *Lord remember thy former loving kindnesses, which are sworn to David in truth*. And hence we see *Moses* oft pleads and prevailes with God in prayer, for the sinning *Israelites*, viz. oh *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*.

Now I pray you, lay all these things together, and then see whether you have any cause to say; What profit is there by Covenant and Church-membership of persons not yet able to profess the faith of Jesus Christ?

Quest. 2. You say, *when families were Churches, all of the family were of the Church, and when a Nation was a Church, all that were of that nation were of that Church; But now Believers being matter of the Church, what if none were admitted, till they can hold forth visible faith, would not many of these things be more clear?*

Answ. In these words there is a threefold mistake.

1. *That all of the family & nation in former times were of the Church*: this

this is falſe, for God never took any to be his Church, but as they were Believers, at leaſt externally, in that Nation; I ſay Believers; which either are profeſſed believers: or promiſed believers, ſuch as by outward Covenant ſhall have the meanes to be made believers in ỹ Nation; and hence you have heard, that the Nation of the Jews ſtood by Faith, and were broken off by unbeliefe, and if any rejected the Covenant: as Iſhmael, and Eſau, they were not of that Church, though they did, and might dwell in ỹ nation, as doubtleſs thouſands did.

2. You think that viſible perſonal Faith only, makes the Church, and members of it; which is an errour, as may appear from many things already ſaid: for Children may be in Gods account profeſſors of ỹ Faith parentally, as well as perſonally; *i.e.* in the profeſſion of their parents, as well as in their own; And hence you ſhall find, that the Covenant God entered into with the Parents of Church-members perſonally, the Children are ſaid, to have that Covenant made with them many hundred yeares after; See for this purpoſe, among hundreds, theſe few Scriptures, *Haggai* 2.5. In Haggai's time God is ſaid to make a Covenant with them then when they came out of Egypt (which was not perſonally, but parentally) ſo *Hoſea* 12.4,5. when God entred into Covenant with Jacob at Bethel; God is ſaid to ſpeak with US, who lived many yeares after; and hence the Children many yeares after, challenge Gods Covenant with them, which was made with their Fathers for them, *Micah* 7.19,20. Hence alſo thoſe Children are ſaid to *Come* to Chriſt (who were not able to come themſelves) but only were brought in the armes of others to Coriſt. It's a known thing among men, that a Father may receive a gift, or Legacy given to him, and his heires, and he, and his heires are bound to perform the condition of the Covenant, and promiſe by which it is conveyed, and that the Child doth this in his Father.

3. You think that if men only, grown up, and able to profeſs Faith, ſhould be of the Church, then all things would be more clear about Children: Truly I believe the quite contrary, upon ỹ grounds before laid down; for, 1. Hereby pollution of ỹ Church ſhall not be avoyded, but rather introduced, to exclude Children from an holy-making Covenant, as we have proved. 2. Hereby that good and benefit of their Covenant, ſhould be loſt, (not gain'd) by excluding them out of Covenant, untill they can perſonally profeſs, and make uſe of the Covenant: The wiſdome of man furthers not the Righteouſneſs of God. And here let me conclude with the naked profeſſion of my Faith to you in this point, which is a Bulwark of defence againſt all that is ſaid by Anabaptiſts againſt baptiſing of Infants.

1. *That the Children of profeſſing Believers are in the ſame Covenant God made with Abraham; Abraham was a Father of many nations, and not of one nation only, and hence the ſame Covenant made with him, and the believing Iſraelin that nation, the ſame Covenant is made with all his believing ſeed in all other nations.* 2. *That Baptiſme is a ſeal of our firſt entrance, and admiſſion into Covenant; and therfore is to be immediately applyed to children of believing parents, aſſoon as ever they be in Covenant, and that it is aſ ſoon as they become the viſible ſeed of the faithfull, for ſo the Covenant to Abraham runs (*I will be thy God, and the God of thy ſeed*) not only his* elect *ſeed, but* Church-ſeed, *(as hath been ſhew'd) not only of his ſeed in that one nation, but in all Nations.*

Theſe two things I cannot tell how to avoid the light of, they are ſo clear: and the ignorance of theſe makes ſo many *Anabaptiſts* (as they are called) and I never yet met with any thing written by them (and much I have read) that was of any conſiderable weight to overthrow theſe. But I forget my ſelfe, and trouble you: My prayer is and ſhall be, *That the Lord would give you underſtanding in all theſe things.*

FINIS.

Errata Preface, *Page* 4. *Line* 20. read wonted. *p.6. l.7.* r. ỹ have fought. *p.7. l.28.* r. ſpiritual *page* 18. *line* 29. for ih r. and. *In ỹ Book page* 12. *line* 34. for now r. were.